

NEWS PAGE 3

THE 'SAFE' CARS THAT CAN KILL

IN THE TABLOID

FASHION: THE FRILL OF IT ALL

IN THE TABLOID

BRIDGE: HOW WOULD MANDELSON AND THE MILLERMAN

NEW SECTION WITH 50 PAGES OF OFFICE, LEGAL AND BANKING APPOINTMENTS

City bets on a tough Budget

Diane Coyle and Anthony Bevins

Share prices soared and the pound fell back from its five-year highs yesterday as the financial markets concluded that today's Budget would be tough enough to reduce the need for higher interest rates.

The FTSE 100 index leapt more than 23 points to 4,728.0, its second biggest one-day rise on record. It was the largest gain in prices since the recovery from the 1987 crash.

Meanwhile the pound slipped back from its overnight high of DM2.91 to end at just under DM2.89. Its index against a range of currencies fell by 0.5 to 101.6.

Pre-Budget speculation that the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, will deliver tax increases designed to dampen the budding consumer boom accounted for the stockmarket euphoria, analysts said. This would reduce the pressure on the Bank of England to cool the economy by increasing base rates again.

Steve Wright, at BZW, said: "This was the last thing you'd expect before a Labour Budget." But the market was reacting to rumours that Mr Brown would target consumers with higher taxes, he said.

Many experts have been calling on the Chancellor to get tough in his first Budget because rising interest rates have helped drive the pound to an uncomfortably high level.

But even as the financial markets concluded the "Iron" Chancellor would live up to his reputation by targeting the housing market and raising "green" and "sin" taxes, Britain's biggest mortgage

lender warned that the housing market was not booming.

The Halifax reported that house prices climbed 0.7 per cent last month, to a level 7.1 per cent higher than a year ago. This was far lower than separate figures from the Nationwide building society. The Halifax said: "There is no need for any specific Budget measures aimed at curbing an al-

New Labour, new despatch box

Gordon Brown has banished the battered old red Gladstonian box that has been used by Chancellors on Budget day for more than a century. He yesterday received the gift of a brand new red leather-lined, hand-finished box made by three young apprentices from the Babcock training programme at Rosyth Royal Dockyard in Fife - who were only told a few days ago what the box was for.

legedly "booming" housing market."

The latest business survey yesterday, of purchasing managers in manufacturing, suggested that the strong pound has not yet harmed output or exports. But it has almost certainly hit profit margins on exports.

Peter Thomson, director general of the Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply, said: "It is encouraging that exports have not yet been hit by the pound. What is left of British industry is a good deal more efficient than it used to be."

But Robert Barrie, chief economist at BZW, said: "Right across the economy profit mar-

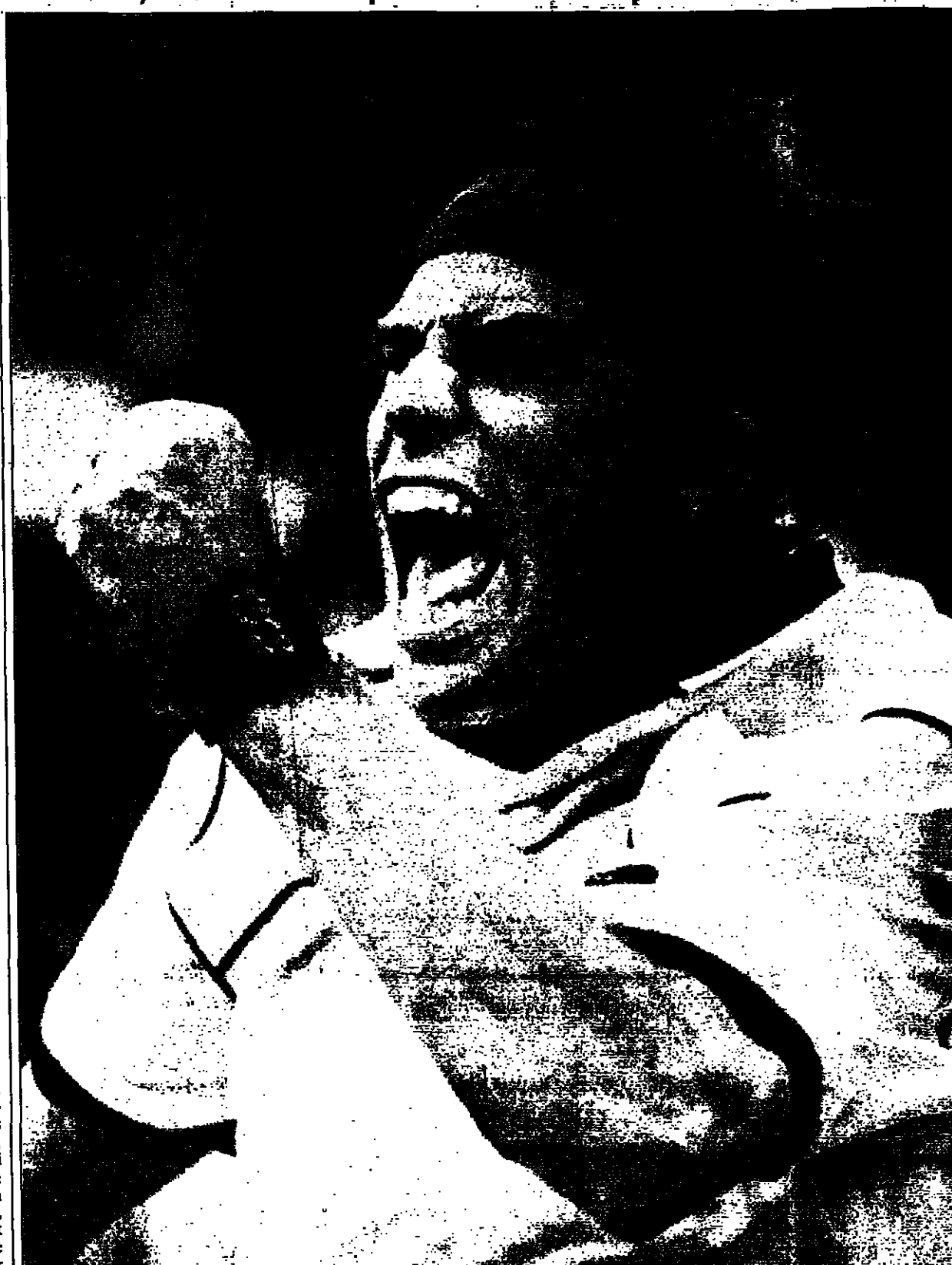
gins are under pressure. Companies are finding it hard to make money." Relief from the strong pound was urgently needed, he warned.

Most economists have been predicting modest tax increases, amounting to less than £5bn, on top of the windfall tax on privatised utilities. Yesterday these expectations had clearly been revised up, with the City now expecting a rise in the tax burden big enough to make a material difference to the interest rate outlook. Analysts warned that the markets would fall in an equally dramatic fashion if these expectations were disappointed. "The stockmarket would be very disappointed if Gordon Brown doesn't deliver," said Mr Wright.

Peter Lilley, shadow Chancellor, told BBC Radio 4's *World at One*: "The only reason Gordon Brown wants to have a Budget now is to raise taxes so that he can tax more now to spend more later. That was always their plan. It has nothing to do with the state of the economic cycle and it's a mere pretence to cover up the age-old tradition of Labour coming in and raising taxes so they can spend more."

The Opposition parties' main pre-Budget challenge was concentrated on the Government's Welfare to Work programme, and the windfall tax that would be used to finance it. Stephen Dorrell, Tory spokesman on education and employment, challenged the Government view that the scheme to provide training opportunities for 250,000 under-25s could become self-financing, once it had been given a kick-start from windfall tax revenues.

Game, set and quarter-final place to Briton



Greg Rusedelski celebrates after powering his way into the quarter-finals at Wimbledon yesterday, beating Richey Reneberg in straight sets. The adopted Briton served 32 aces and wiped the American off the court in less than two hours with a score of 7-6 6-4 7-6, and said he was determined to go all the way to the final. "It feels great to be in the quarter-finals but I don't want to stop here," he said.

Photograph: Henk Koster/Professional Sport

Higher tea prices in the bag

Alexandra Williams

A recycled teabag from yesterday's breakfast is not every one's cup of tea. But with the price of a British cuppa set to soar, many may sacrifice the perfect brew and resort to just that.

A staggering 185 million cups are drunk every day - more than the combined amount of coffee and soft-drink consumption, but yesterday a UN food agency warned consumers that droughts in tea-producing countries will mean price increases.

The Food and Agriculture Organisation in Rome said the dry weather in Sri Lanka and many African countries has caused a 37-per-cent drop in production in the first quarter of this year.

With demand expected to remain stable, prices will inevitably rise, it said.

Tea broker Tony Kane, of Wilson Smitheth, said: "If the cost of tea on the supermarket shelves was going to reflect the price increase of raw tea you'd be looking at a 20- to 25-per-cent rise."

"But if there's going to be a whack-up in price then it won't be for a few months."

Britain imports 150,000 tons of tea a year to satisfy the 77 per cent of the population who drink it daily.

Twenty countries produce tea, although Britain imports more than half from Kenya alone.

But Sarah Ward, a Tea Council spokeswoman, said British companies would be prepared to go to other countries for supplies. She said: "In an average teabag there are 35 different blends of tea. The job of a blender is to maintain quality without compromising the price - it's quite an art."

"Tea companies will have anticipated the problem and looked elsewhere. They will be keeping an eye on China's and India's production."

Van Den Bergh Foods, which accounts for a fifth of the UK tea market, supplying companies such as Brooke Bond, said it was far too early in the year to evaluate how it would hit the consumer.

Spokesman Duncan Bogie said: "We are used to fluctuations in the raw materials - it's quite common. It will take some time to appraise the full implications of the droughts in Sri Lanka and Africa."

The announcement follows news of a rise in the cost of coffee. Extreme cold weather hit production in Brazil this year, forcing producers to relocate entire coffee plantations to warmer areas.

A frenzy of buying by speculators forced prices up to a 20-year high. Inevitably the consumer paid the price, with Nestlé, for example, putting the price of its 100g jars of Gold Blend up by 17p to £2.54.



INSIDE

Woman 'invented killer'
A woman stabbed her fiancé to death after a ferocious argument and then invented a "mystery murdering motorist" who had killed him in a road-rage attack, a court was told. Page 8

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Why John Major didn't go to Hong Kong

Steve Boggan

John Major could have been in Hong Kong but, for him, there was no competition. If saying goodbye to Britain's last colony of significance meant not saying goodbye to Denis Compton, his boyhood cricketing hero, then Hong Kong would wait.

The former Prime Minister was one of 2,000 friends, families and faithful who turned up at Westminster Abbey in London yesterday to say that goodbye and to remember the skill, grace and flamboyance that thrilled a generation of cricket lovers.

"To watch Denis Compton play cricket on a good day was to know what joy was," said Mr Major. "I could have been in Hong Kong. But I think I made the right choice."

It was the sort of choice being made more often these days by the former Prime Minister. Immediately after his general election defeat, Mr Major chose to go to Lord's instead of presiding over his party's disarray. And many commentators are already predicting that his memoirs will distance him further from those he will say alienated the voters.

Compton, who died on 23 April -

Saint George's Day - at the age of 78, is the first cricketer to be given a memorial service at Westminster Abbey.

And not since the service for broadcaster Richard Dimbleby in 1966 was a celebration of life so oversubscribed. More than a thousand applicants had their request for tickets turned down.

Those who made it came from all walks of life and spanned several generations. Keith Miller, 77, Compton's old Australian adversary, hobbled in on crutches; Sir Colin Cowdrey was there, talking of the man who brought sunshine to the dark post-war years; and JJ Warr, former president of the Marylebone Cricket Club, told how effortlessly the genius astonished those who came to see his flair on the football field for Arsenal and his panache between the wickets for Middlesex.

"In the last weeks of his life, a comet appeared in the skies over Britain," said Mr Warr in a gently irreverent, but warmly-received address. "Compo was a comet in his own right. Wherever he went, he cast brilliance in the sporting firmament."

The outpouring of goodwill took Compton's family by surprise. Richard, 41, his son from the second of three



Best of enemies: Keith Miller, the former Australian all-rounder, mourns his old adversary at Westminster Abbey. Photograph: Brian Harris

marriages flew over from his South African home to attend.

"I didn't live with Dad for most of my life, so it's very moving for me to see the regard in which he is still held over here," he said. "It is a tribute to the British people that they have remembered him so well."

Compton played cricket 78 times for England, scoring 38,942 runs - an av-

erage of 51.85. He also played on the left-wing for Arsenal, winning championship and FA Cup medals and earning 14 caps for England.

"He was unique," said Sir Colin Cowdrey. "Everything he did was effortless, yet, despite his brilliance, he never displayed any arrogance whatsoever."

"After the war, there were a few priceless people - like him and Vera

Lynn - who brought us back to our senses and taught us how to smile again."

After the service, whose congregation ranged from Lords Archer and Runcie to the comedian Jimmy Tarbuck, the air was thick with Compo anecdotes. Of his notoriously bad timekeeping and disorganisation. Of the times he would turn up to play for England wearing the dinner jacket from last night's party. Of his smiling face everywhere advertising Brylcreem - in spite of its conspicuous absence from his kit bag.

"This has been a great honour for him," said his widow, Christine. "I knew he was regarded as a big sporting favourite, but I had no idea that he was this big. He would have loved it."

Aside from the cricketing records, there may be another Compton legacy: Richard Compton's son Nicholas. The 14-year-old has inherited his grandfather's passion for cricket and captains his year's cricket team at Hilton College in Durban.

"His says he wants to come to England to play," said Richard Compton. "And if he's anything like his grandfather there'll be no stopping him."



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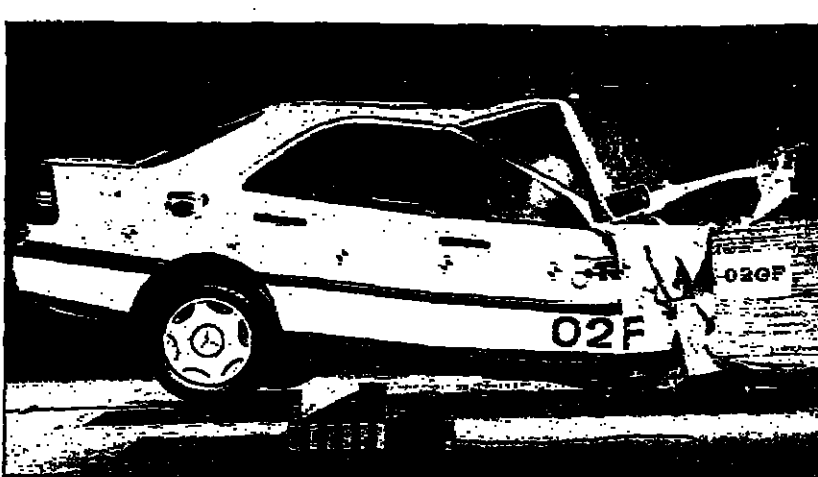


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The high road to disaster...



Up against it: A Volvo S40 (the only car awarded a four-star safety rating), a Mercedes-Benz C Class and Rover 600 (both rated with two stars) being tested under crash conditions at the Transport Research Laboratory yesterday

Tests show that even 'safe' cars can kill

Randeep Ramesh
Transport Correspondent

Some of Britain's best-selling family saloon cars do not protect their occupants from serious injury in road accidents, according to the results of official European crash protection tests out yesterday.

Thirteen popular models were smashed into deformable walls to simulate crash conditions at the Transport Research Laboratory. Two main tests were conducted to gauge the protection cars gave to occupants and pedestrians in the event of front and side-impact crashes.

Only one car, the Volvo S40, was awarded a four-star rating in the tests – the highest possible under the Euro New Car Assessment Programme (NCAP) ratings. Five cars got three stars – the Ford Mondeo, Vauxhall Vectra, Volkswagen Passat, Nissan Primera and Renault Laguna.

The results showed that some expensive marques did not offer greater protection from injury. The £20,000 Mercedes C-class only received two stars as did the £17,000 BMW 3-Series.

The Mercedes, which is currently being redesigned, did particularly badly in the side-impact test – where a car is rammed from the side by a collapsible barrier at 30mph. According to researchers, when the test took place with the Mercedes "the [driver's] door struck the dummy's chest before the side airbag had fully inflated".

Edmund King, head of campaigns at the RAC, said the tests showed "price alone was no guide to how well protected a driver and passengers are. The lesson is the consumer cannot judge a car's safety on the price, manufacturer's reputation or advertising."

Other cars which only scored two stars included the Rover 600, Audi A4, Citroen Xantia, Saab 900 and Peugeot 406. The results brought a furious response from the industry – aware that the public may shun cars that do not make the grade.

In the last batch of tests in February, the programme ranked the Rover 100, a popular hatchback, as the worst for car safety. Sales from January to May this year were 32 per cent less than the corresponding period in 1996.

The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders condemned the tests as "trivial and misleading". Roger King, the society's public affairs director, said: "To star cars for safety on the basis of two different tests, ignoring other factors such as handling and braking characteristics is insufficient for accurate consumer guidance."

Mr King said the SMMT would not expect manufacturers to use the results in publicity material. Ernie Thomson, chief executive of the SMMT, said the industry had some "reservations about the tests" which he would discuss with the Government later this month.

The industry's comment brought a swift rebuke from the Consumers' Association, whose chief executive, Sheila McKechie, called on the industry to stop "rubbing the tests and undermining consumer confidence".

The test's supporters appear to have the upper hand. Neil Kinnock, the European Union's Transport Commissioner, welcomed the new tests and announced that the programme would be extended.

Describing the EU's annual 45,000 road accident deaths and 1.6 million injuries as "an appalling toll of tragedy", Mr Kinnock said road deaths could be cut by 30 per cent and the number of serious injuries reduced by half if all cars matched the levels of the safest models.

The survey findings will be published in *What Car?* and be made available to all 12 million RAC and AA members. However, the Government will not force dealers to carry the information, Baroness Hayman, the roads minister, said: "I believe people will research into the safety aspects of their next car as more information becomes available."



But it isn't a dream. ... but you might wake up in hospital: The Mercedes C-class did badly in the tests

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Driven to distraction: Above, Maureen Rees and her husband Dave. Below, another starling driver's hell continues when she cannot face the road even after passing her test



The learners from hell grip the nation

Jojo Moyes

Last night almost one-fifth of the country's population sat down in front of their television to watch a group of learner drivers reverse up kerbs, fail to stop and generally frighten the life out of their teachers.

Driving School, the latest in a series of "observational soaps" on BBC1, has been so successful that one subject, Cardiff cleaner Maureen Rees, yesterday achieved national prominence for passing her driving test at the eighth attempt.

Mrs Rees's driving lessons, aided by her long-suffering husband, Dave, have become something of a national obsession. Her terrifying exploits have helped push the viewing figures for *Driving School* up to 10 million – placing it fourth in the ratings, just behind *Coronation Street*, *EastEnders* and *Emmerdale Farm*.

The audience tuned into the documentary series to watch Mrs Rees, 55, swerve into the path of a vehicle in the fast lane, argue incessantly with her husband and even run into him with their car, a Lada called Betty.

While surprised by the series' success, its BBC producers believe they have hit upon something of a winning formula. There are two more observational soap series in development: *Vets in Practice*, a follow-up to the equally successful *Vets' School*, and *Holiday Reps*, which follows a group of holiday reps in their first season in Minorca and Lanzarote.

"It's about having characters that people can latch onto," the executive producer of the series, Grant Mansfield, said. "There's an element of the underdog there, someone destined to fail but who passed at the end."

Trying to explain the success of *Driving Lessons*, he added: "There's also the obvious thing about rites of passage and universal experience. Everyone

can remember their own lessons." Martin Arnold, spokesman for the British School of Motoring, agrees. "It's something that touches everybody's lives in one way or another. There's also a mentality among drivers that we all think we're the greatest. We're all very critical of other drivers. And it's funny watching other people," he said.

The series has been attacked by some driving instructors, who believe that their profession has been made to look foolish. But Mr Arnold says that the most important thing it highlights is the importance of finding a good driving instructor.

'We all think we're the greatest drivers. And it's funny watching other people'

"Learning to drive and taking your driving test are two of the most stressful things in people's lives. Things are different from when mum and dad learned to drive," he said.

"To people who want to take driving lessons, BSM's message would be 'don't be fooled by what you've seen. It can be a lot more straightforward. And make sure you get the right driving instructor. You've seen the nightmare that can happen if you attempt to do it with a relative'."

Approximately 1.5 million people are currently learning to drive, with 1 million driving tests taking place annually.

Maureen Rees's test day will be screened in two weeks. Drivers in the United States should take note: Mrs Rees plans to celebrate with a fly-drive holiday to Florida.

Drink-drivers halted

Devices that disable cars if the driver is over the alcohol limit should be considered in the continuing fight against drinking and driving, said a report out yesterday.

Breath Alcohol Ignition Interlock Devices have been used on convicted drink-drive offenders in the United States, Canada and Australia.

They are one of a number of new ideas that are "urgently needed to beat the menace of drink-driving", said the report from the British Institute of Traffic Education Research. Produced for the Portman Group, which is funded by several leading drinks companies, the report called for tougher sentences such as immediate licence suspension, confiscation of cars belonging to convicted drink-drivers and the expansion of rehabilitation programmes for offenders.

"This research shows that to reduce the drink-drive limit alone would be of limited benefit only," said Portman Group director Jean Coussins.

"I've just taken early retirement. So now I want to keep bees and play golf. But I need to have enough money coming in to enjoy these new hobbies. Can you help?"

George Bayfield, Ipswich



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A wider role in the home is often incompatible with being a breadwinner. **Glenda Cooper** on the latest research

Why a working father can never be a true new man

Family-friendly policies, such as job shares and flexi-time are failing to be relevant to many working fathers, according to a new report.

Cutting back on working hours is simply not an option for many working dads who may want to spend more time with their families but as the main breadwinners just cannot afford to do so. But many men still have no idea that becoming a father may affect their work and have no way of dealing with the increased demands that fatherhood brings, the British Psychological Society's Women and Psychology Conference heard yesterday.

More than 50 per cent of men had not made any plans to combine work and fatherhood said Sarah Lewis, a chartered organisational psychologist.

"With working mothers there are visible signs - people are always asking when is it due or are you going back to work? That doesn't happen to men," said Ms Lewis, who interviewed 200 men about how they coped with being a working father and identified three main groups.

The first was the "daddy track" - workers who had adopted long-term strategies to help them be a successful father. These workers deliberately tried to work shorter hours, had lower expectations of their role at work and often did not seek or refused promotion. They sought jobs close to home and also often chose jobs that had a minimum of overnight travel.

The second group had partners who worked full-time who employed a lot of short-term strategies in order to play their



Balancing act: A working dad collects his son from the Pillar Box Nursery, Bow, east London yesterday, after a long day. Photograph: Tony Buckingham

part in childrearing. "They were significantly more involved in day-to-day childcare than their fathers had been," said Ms Lewis. "Because their wives worked they had to manage their working lives better and do more childcare."

The other group was the "in-

divisible parents", she said. "These fathers said 'I work long hours because I am the main breadwinner. My wife is at home looking after the children. We're both doing a good job between the two of us and it doesn't matter how often I see my children'."

While a quarter of all fathers said that they would always or frequently take time off if their children needed them too, only 4 per cent said they would leave a meeting early. "There was a need to be visible at work," Ms Lewis said. "The men needed to be seen to be there."

More than one in seven said they were having to work in the evenings or at the weekends. Family-friendly policies as they existed at the moment were not practical for many families. "They are suitable for the second breadwinner or the main childcare, not the main bread-

winner trying to support a family," said Ms Lewis. "Job shares or flexi-time often involve working less time but the drop in income is not what the families are looking for."

Ms Lewis said that more helpful measures would be a change in attitude. "Organisa-

... but real women can still get ahead

The 1980s "Working Girl" image is out of date, with women no longer having to resort to adopting male characteristics to get ahead at work.

In the past it has been thought that the women who did best were those who employed masculine qualities such as assertiveness, aggression and dominance.

By doing this it was thought they were more valued by others and in their own eyes than their sisters who were seen as more traditionally feminine.

Rut Sara Paterson, psychologist at the University of Westminster, told the British Psychological Society's Women and Psychology Conference in Loughborough her study of 50 women in a variety of professions - including computer programmers, physiotherapists and chefs - showed that women who were characterised by more feminine qualities, such as empathy, friendliness and compassion, did just as well at work and valued themselves as highly.

Ms Paterson said she was thrilled by the findings.

"Now women can be seen as powerful women while still acknowledging their femininity."

tions need to develop a talent for recognising and rewarding performance and achievement from their current talent for recording visibility and attendance.

"It's this idea of being there which is counting against working fathers."



Playground chat: Boys are more likely to brag about their conquests. Photograph: Jane Baker

Tarts and studs still dominate the playground

It may be 30 years after the sexual revolution, but in teenagers' eyes girls are still tarts and boys are still studs.

A study of 14- to 16-year-old girls and boys has found the old double standards firmly in place, with girls still worrying about their reputations while boys brag about their conquests. But researchers warned that unless ac-

tion was taken to counter such attitudes, implications for sexual health were serious in the light of HIV/Aids.

Seen as "looking for it" if they carried condoms, girls were either having to risk their health or their reputations.

Linda Dainty of the University of Wolverhampton, asked the teenagers to imagine telling a

creature from outer space about what sex was like. All the boys expected orgasm or "the buzz", but none of the girls spoke about having an orgasm.

Telling friends about sexual exploits was seen as a pleasure for boys but a danger for girls. Boys were termed "studs" or "stallions", while girls remained "slags" or "tarts". Girls who en-

joyed sex were downgraded even further to being "dirty cows".

"Boys relived the time they had through their sexual story-telling, they would go up in their mates' esteem," said Ms Dainty, speaking at the British Psychological Society's Women and Psychology Conference in Loughborough yesterday.

"In effect they had two orgasms - one real and one in the telling. The 15-year-old girls told me that one of the worst things about sex were if [their partner] went and told everybody and 'getting you a name'."

Both sexes thought that either boys or girls should carry condoms to protect against sexually transmitted disease or pregnancy, but "girls who carried condoms on the

off chance were perceived as tarts by boys, and even girls colluded in this thinking that such girls were asking for it," said Ms Dainty.

She warned that safe sex messages were unlikely to be effective until these attitudes were addressed. "Society's current system of sexual morality operates in opposition to the urgent need to protect sexual health."

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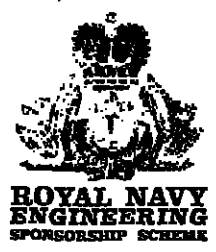
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news

Probationers commit a murder a week

Jason Bennett
Crime Correspondent

Offenders on probation are charged with one murder and a sexual assault on average every week, a Home Office report revealed yesterday.

Criminals serving community sentences and under supervision after being released from prison are also on average said to be responsible for an attempted murder every fortnight and nearly one act of violence every week.

In four cases, mentally ill people who failed to receive psy-

chiatric treatment despite it being a condition of their probation order, went on to kill. Failure properly to supervise criminals was found in nearly one-fifth of all cases, some of which contributed to further reoffending.

The study, which disclosed that 69 murder charges were brought against people under supervision during a 13-month period, will be seized upon by critics of the Probation Service who have long argued that it is a soft option and have called for greater use of imprisonment. There will also be concern

Charges against criminals under supervision		
During 13 months to December 1996, there were 285 charges against people on probation, including:	Attempted murder - 32 Rape - 30 Possession of firearm/offensive weapon - 19 Robbery - 15 GBH - 12 Indecent assault - 10	Kidnap - 7 Attempted rape - 6 Wounding with intent - 5 Manslaughter - 5 Buggery - 4 Armed robbery - 4

about the apparent lack of treatment for mentally ill offenders. This follows an alarming number of killings by former psychiatric patients.

But chief probation officers

argued yesterday that the offences, while shocking, were only a tiny proportion of the 190,000 people they dealt with every year.

Helen Crosby, of the Home

Office's Probation Unit, concluded in the report: "The analysis shows that offenders under probation supervision are charged with murder or a serious sexual offence at a rate of

about one per week; this is a matter of considerable concern."

The Home Office took the unusual step yesterday of publishing the Probation Circular of Serious Instant Reports, which are voluntary provided by the 54 regional probation services in England and Wales.

The study examined 204 incidents involving 184 offenders from November 1995 to December 1996, most aged 20-35; nearly half had a previous conviction for a violent offence. Most offences happened within eight months of supervision.

The vast majority of the offenders had problems involving mental illness, drug and alcohol abuse, and convictions for sexual offences, but only one-fifth of their sentences included specific measures to deal with these. About one-third of the 27 mentally disordered offenders had difficulty obtaining treatment.

Supervision failures identified in 36 cases included not following national standards, failure to carry out home visits, not covering staff absences, poor inter-service and inter-agency communications, and failure

to deal with negligent officers.

Mary Honeyball, of the Association of Chief Officers of Probation, said: "The report shows that probation work is very often a matter of life and death ... This report gives no clues as to how many incidents are avoided due to the well judged and timely actions of staff."

A Home Office statement said offences committed while on probation were of "great concern". But added: "However, such incidents do not necessarily indicate a supervision failure by the probation service."

The beautiful and the exotic: a smuggler's booty more lucrative than the drug trade

Kim Sengupta

When Customs officers smashed open the two statues at London's Heathrow airport all their suspicions appeared to be confirmed. But the package inside was not the expected high-grade cannabis. Instead they had stumbled across something much more lucrative for smugglers - rhino horn.

The horn highly prized in the Far East sells for about £7,000 a kilo. Cannabis would fetch about £3,000 a kilo. There was more than £25,000 worth hidden in the two Plasticine figures.

That shipment from South Africa, intercepted in London on the way to Taiwan, is just one illustration of the amount of money that can be made from endangered species on the international black market.

Ivory, crocodile skins, pelts and bones of big cats like tigers and leopards, live rare birds and birds eggs, corals and tortoise shells are all much in demand by unscrupulous collec-

range of goods from crocodile leather handbags to stuffed birds and turtle shell ashtrays. However, the goods would be confiscated if detected being brought into Britain, and prosecution may follow. The last available figures, for 1995-96, show that Customs seized 12,178 items derived from endangered species, 4,374 live animals, and 2,748 plants.

To highlight the problem Customs and the Natural History Museum have opened an exhibition at the museum in South Kensington, west London. It is due to run from today until August 31. The main aim is to inform travellers going abroad about endangered species, and the inadvisability of buying products made from them.

Customs officer Charles Mackay, head of the CITES enforcement team at Heathrow, said: "We came across a Russian recently with 200 live turtles packed in a couple of cases. One of them had escaped and was making its way around the baggage carousel. But we also have much more sophisticated smuggling attempts."

"Ivory is one of the most common items. We are also coming across products from tigers and leopards which are in demand for traditional medicines by expatriate Chinese communities. A tiny plaster strip with tiger balm can sell for around £7."

Dawn Primarolo, Financial Secretary to the Treasury said: "Travellers need to know souvenirs could be made from endangered species and their purchase could encourage this unlawful trade. This exhibition will increase public awareness."

Customs officers say they would also like to see awareness on environmental issues raised among the judiciary. Most of the prosecution for smuggling endangered species products is under Section 170 of the Customs and Excise Act of 1979 - carrying a maximum sentence of seven years, and/or an unlimited fine.

But in 1995 a man who was convicted of possessing more than 500 dead endangered specimens and believed to have links with an international syndicate only received a two year sentence.

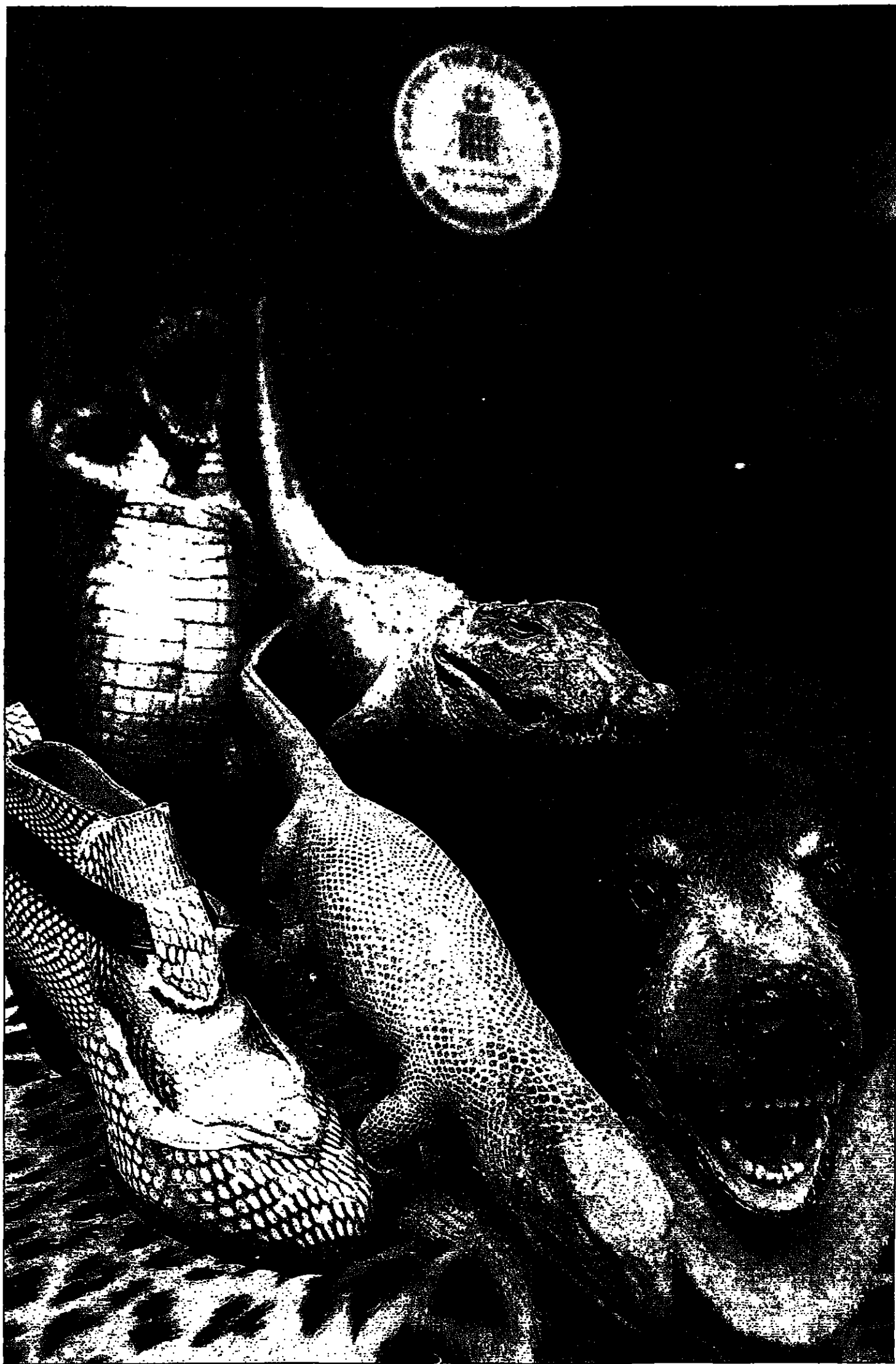
And, after another successful conviction, the leader of an international gang of rare egg smugglers was sentenced to just eight months, and his associates received between two and three months each.

'Travellers need to know that their souvenirs could be made from endangered species'

tors and traders across the world. However, the problem is not just a large scale commercial one. A huge amount of banned items seized at ports and airports in the United Kingdom are brought back by ordinary travellers who had bought them as souvenirs abroad.

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) has been signed by 136 member countries of the United Nations. Under its regulations more than 800 species of plants and animals are currently banned from international trade, and another 23,000 are strictly controlled.

But the international restrictions do not apply to indigenous domestic markets, and there is nothing to stop tourists from buying a wide



Customs haul: A selection of products made from endangered species, some bought as souvenirs, which have been brought into this country. An exhibition opens today at the Natural History Museum aimed at alerting travellers of the problem. Photograph: Peter Macdarmid

Two are jailed in 'Band of Gold' tragedy

Kate Watson-Smyth

Two men were jailed for 10 years yesterday for the manslaughter of a teenager who turned to prostitution after watching a television series about vice-girls. Lucy Burchell, 16, died after taking an overdose of heroin. She started to work on the streets after watching the ITV series *Band of Gold*.

Tahir Khan, 26, from Salter, Birmingham and Rungzab Khan, 25, of Hodge Hill, Birmingham, were also convicted at Birmingham Crown Court of supplying heroin, and possession with intent to supply. Lucy disappeared on 15 August and her body was found five days later in Edgbaston, Birmingham.

Passing sentence, Mr Justice McKinnon said: "You are both, in a real sense, evil young men, actively engaged in the wicked trade of heroin-dealing." The conviction for manslaughter was "by omission", because they failed to summon medical help for Lucy after she fell into a coma. "She died when small effort on your part to summon help may well have saved her life."

The court heard she began working the streets of Walsall in the evenings while sitting her GCSE exams during the day. Each night she took a change of clothes to a children's home where a 15-year-old friend was living, and the two then went to a red-light area. According to a another prostitute, herself aged 15, Lucy would "go with anyone, anywhere".

By the time she died, her parents, Graham and Christine, of Great Wyrley, Staffordshire, knew Lucy was mixing with prostitutes. They tried to reason with her, offered her a car and said they would buy her a horse if she would stop. They thought their pleas had succeeded when Lucy wrote them a letter apologising for upsetting them. But she continued to walk the streets.

The letter, adorned with hearts and kisses, said: "I can understand that you must be worried. I suppose I thought though there was no reason for you to be worried (which there isn't) but I know how much I must be upsetting you."

Two days later she was dead. The two men had picked her up in the Caldmere area of Walsall and taken her to a house in Edgbaston where they fed her a dose of 80-per-cent-pure heroin. She fell into a coma and by 6pm the following day she was dead.

After the trial her brother Craig, a student, read a statement from his parents: "We will never be able to make sense of what has happened and the loss of our daughter will always be with us, every day ..."

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Genetic weapons to provide force for high-tech ethnic war

Jeremy Laurence
Health Editor

Genetic weapons that could be targeted at specific racial groups in a form of hi-tech ethnic warfare are to be investigated by the British Medical Association.

They do not exist but could be available in five to 10 years, the association said. Doctors fear developments in genetic therapy to cure disease might be turned to evil ends in the hands of a dictator.

Biological or chemical weapons could theoretically be targeted by addition of a gene marker to attack a specific part of the human body. The genetically engineered toxin might be sprayed into the air or added to food and water. If clusters of genes only seen in particular ethnic groups could be identified, it might be possible to de-

velop an ethnic weapon. Vivienne Nathanson, head of science and ethics at the BMA, said: "It is clearly a very frightening scenario. We are trying to prevent new weapons being developed and distributed. We want to know whether genetic weapons are feasible and how to control or stop them."

The investigation, commissioned by the association's board of science, was announced at the BMA's annual conference in Edinburgh. It is due for completion in 12 months. Scientists expect to be able to produce the first genetically targeted drugs in five years. The drugs would repair faulty DNA within the cell and might be used to treat conditions such as diabetes and cystic fibrosis. Dr Nathanson said: "No one has been able to tell me why, if we can produce ge-



Tribal conflict: Doctors are concerned that ethnic warfare could be waged in future with genetically targeted drugs

Photograph: Colorific

netically targeted drugs with a good effect, we won't be able to produce similar drugs with a bad effect in the same time-scale."

The Human Genome Project, which is mapping the entire human genetic code, might produce enough information to allow specific genetic types to be identified. "We know the genes for hair colour, eye colour and height. If 90 per cent of the [enemy] have blue eyes, blond

hair and are over six feet tall, that could be the cluster you are looking for." Certain blood types were commoner in different ethnic groups and could also be targeted, she said.

Earlier the conference called for the manufacture and supply of instruments of torture to be banned after hearing of British companies that had sold the equipment abroad.

An iron foundry in Birmingham

had produced leg and arm shackles and other companies had made hi-tech torture chambers, which used low-level noise to drive victims mad, and a mass gallows for export to Saudi Arabia, the conference was told. Investigations by Amnesty International had found a number of companies exploiting legal loopholes to manufacture and export the equipment.

James Barrett, a member of

the BMA council and chairman of the medical group of Amnesty International, said shackles made by the Birmingham company were deliberately designed to crush the radial nerve in the arm when tightened. "They made good profits," he said.

Sandy Macara, chairman of the BMA, said: "There is nothing good about the profits made out of this trade."

The conference called for the creation of mechanisms in every country through which doctors could report human-rights abuses and torture.

It supported the Government's ban on land mines, which was announced last May following an appeal by Diana, Princess of Wales, and said the money saved on the defence budget should be used to clear them.

Doctor's dilemma over cancer patient

A doctor described yesterday how she was accused of taking the moral high ground after she pleaded with a social services manager to help a patient die at home, writes Jeremy Laurence.

Dr Joy Edelman, consultant physician at King George Hospital, Redbridge, north-east London, said her patient who had cancer, was forced to spend his last weeks in hospital separated from his family where he died a lonely and miserable death.

The case was presented to the British Medical Association's annual conference in Edinburgh as an example of how expensive hospital beds are being blocked by a shortage of cheap facilities in the community which prevent the admission of the seriously ill and deny terminal cases a dignified death.

Dr Edelman had contacted social services to obtain a hoist and other equipment and was told there would be a delay. She protested that it would be too late. "The man I spoke to accused me of standing on the moral high ground. I said 'yes, and I was proud of it'. I said it was a disgrace that any remaining happiness my patient might have had from his last weeks was being denied to him."

The conference called for proper funding of community care after hearing half of all blocked medical and geriatric hospital beds were occupied by patients who could not be discharged because of a shortage of social services funds.

Cold and flu sufferers will be sent to hospital in GP shake-up

Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

Patients will be able to go to hospital for so-called "Monday morning" ailments such as colds, flu and headaches, normally treated in GPs' surgeries, under plans announced yesterday by the Government to expand primary care services in the NHS.

Hospitals and health authorities will be given permission to hire GPs on annual salaries of around £50,000 to open up surgeries in areas where doctors are reluctant to run general practices. They could use clinics in the NHS hospitals, or empty shop premises in the high street.

Most GPs are independent contractors, with NHS con-

tracts delivering about £45,000 a year. With additional sums for practice staff and expenses, it can provide a comfortable living, but many family doctors are now complaining about the increasing workload, stress, and long hours, which may be putting off young doctors from joining general practices in the inner cities, where the problems of recruitment and retention are

particularly acute. Hospitals and health authorities will be able to attract GPs by offering them more than the contract rate for the job. They will be able to offer women doctors the chance of more flexible working arrangements to enable them to return to the profession after a career break for having children.

The GPs will still act as

"gatekeepers", deciding whether to refer their patients to the consultants in the hospital for more treatment.

Alan Milburn, the health minister, yesterday announced that salaried GPs would be encouraged, in a series of pilot schemes, to start from April 1998. But he ruled out allowing supermarkets or high street chemists to run general practices

by hiring GPs. Mr Milburn said it would help to recruit family doctors to areas such as Sunderland, Leeds, and London, where shortages were being experienced.

Other GPs will be allowed to develop "one stop" surgeries, combining care for chronic diseases, minor injuries, the mentally ill and may include community hospital beds for

short-stay treatment. One practice in Newark wants to offer optician's services, dentistry, a pharmacy, a lay counsellor, and a rural advice centre. "The Government's vision is to bring the NHS closer to home. Some of these proposals are about blurring the distinction between primary [GPs] and secondary [hospital] care," the minister said. However, having taken

over the pilot projects from the Tory government, Mr Milburn has refused to approve any schemes to expand services by GP fundholders, in which practices run their own budgets, because the Government is committed to replacing them with locality commissioning, where GPs in an area band together to obtain care for their patients from hospitals.

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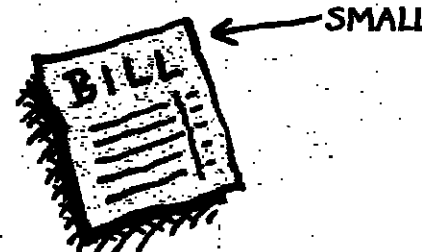
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news

Woman 'invented road-rage killer'

Michael Streeter

A woman stabbed her fiancé to death after a ferocious argument and then invented a "mystery murdering motorist" who had killed him in a road rage attack, a court was told yesterday.

David Crigman QC, for the prosecution, told the jury at Birmingham Crown Court, that Tracie Andrews and Lee Harvey rowed while driving home from a pub before Mr Harvey was stabbed with a penknife more than 30 times in the head, neck, chest and back.

"After the attack she was to claim that the death was caused by the occupant of another car in the course of a driving dispute," Mr Crigman said. "There never was some mystery murdering motorist. It was her."

The court heard that Ms Andrews, 28, who denies murder, and Mr Harvey, 25, had a "volatile and turbulent" relationship. Three months before the killing on 1 December, 1996, police had been called to Mr Harvey's flat after an argument.

On the day of Mr Harvey's

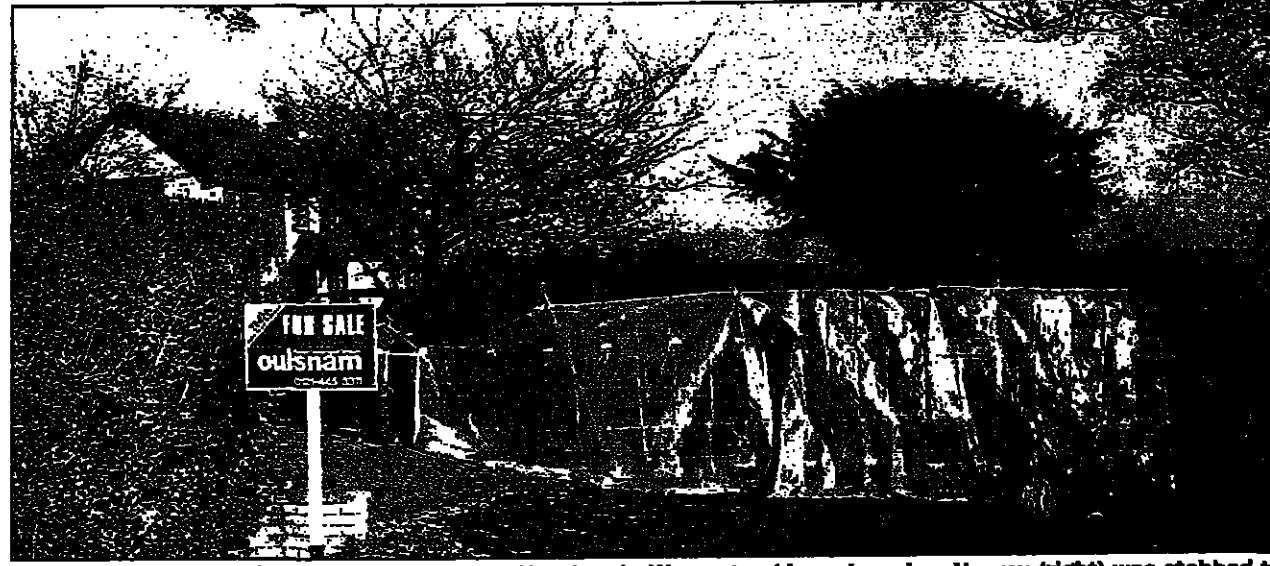


On trial: Tracie Andrews arriving at Birmingham Crown Court yesterday. Centre: The murder scene near Alvechurch, Worcestershire, where Lee Harvey (right) was stabbed to death. Photograph: Newsteam

death it appeared they had had a long argument at Ms Andrews' home. Later they had rowed again in the car on the way back from a pub in Bromsgrove to her flat in Alvechurch, Worcester-

shire, but Mr Harvey's white RS2000 Escort turbo stopped and both had got out. Ms Andrews had then launched a "violent" attack on him.

On their way from the pub



along country lanes, the couple were spotted by two witnesses whose evidence meant the defendant's assertion of a second car pursuing the white Escort was "a lie", Mr Crigman said.

Later Ms Andrews tucked the knife she had used to murder Mr Harvey into her high-heeled boots, disposing of it in a waste bin while being treated at Princess Alexandra hospital in

Redditch, on the night of the killing, Mr Crigman said.

The bins were regularly emptied and Mr Crigman said that as it took police several days to collate evidence pointing to

Ms Andrews as the killer, the knife had long gone.

The court was told that Richard Main, who was visiting a friend, Susan Duncan, at a house near the murder scene, heard a voice in distress and Mr Main asked Mrs Duncan to call an ambulance while he ran back to the road. The defendant had "mentioned no other car, no other motorist".

Mr Crigman alleged that it was not until Mrs Duncan came out of the house that Ms Andrews began to construct her complex story of her fiancé dying in a road rage attack.

Ms Andrews had described the other vehicle as a black Sierra-type car and said that it was the passenger who had attacked her fiancé after they had exchanged rude gestures.

At one point, the front seat passenger of the other vehicle got out of the car and went towards Mr Harvey. He had "big staring eyes", she said and remembered her fiancé calling him something like "fat man".

Ms Andrews alleged that the man then hit out at Mr Harvey several times. The man had also hit her and when she got up he was walking back to his car. She had said: "Lee was making a funny noise like a gurgling

noise. I knelt in something wet. ... I started to cry."

Mr Crigman told the court that a "hank" of human hair matching Ms Andrews' own hair had been found at the murder scene along with a few strands clasped in the dead man's hands.

Also, blood splashes, consistent with having come from

'There was never some mystery murdering motorist'

an injured person dripping blood on to the floor was found at the back of the Mr Harvey's car, which Mr Crigman said was "totally inconsistent" with Ms Andrews' story that he had been attacked at the front of the vehicle. He said: "In short, Lee Harvey was under attack and assaulted in a wholly different location than where the defendant was claiming some mystery attacker attacked him." The case continues today.

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Woodhead 'in cahoots' with prince

Judith Judd
Education Editor

Chris Woodhead, the Chief Inspector of Schools, has been accused of acting "in cahoots" with The Prince of Wales to promote a teacher training initiative which appears to conflict with government policy.

Don Foster, the Liberal Democrats' education spokesman, says that Mr Woodhead's plans for more school-centred teacher training contradict ministers' statements before the election about how teachers should be trained.

He asked Estelle Morris, the schools minister, in the Commons last week: "Will she explain on whose authority the Chief Inspector of Schools, Mr Chris Woodhead, possibly in cahoots with Prince Charles, is promoting school-centred teacher training?" Prince Charles, who shares Mr Woodhead's concern about "trendy" teaching methods, is understood to have had several meetings with the chief inspector, including at least one at Highgrove.

Traditionalists, who blame universities and colleges for failing to train new teachers to teach the basics, support school-centred schemes started by the previous government under which schools devise and run their own courses.

However, the schemes were attacked by Labour, which

favours a partnership between schools and higher education, during debates on the Education Bill in 1994.

Ministers are preparing to announce changes to school-centred training as part of a package of measures to be published on Friday.

Ms Morris said in reply to Mr Foster: "I remain convinced that we need a combination of sound practice in schools and strong links with institutions of higher education if we are to train people to be effective teachers."

Many teachers argue that reports from the Office for Standards in Education, which Mr Woodhead heads, show that the schemes have had only limited success. Experts say that they fail to give new teachers the overview of education which they need.

Mr Woodhead said last night: "I do not accept the school-centred teacher training is a failed experiment. I am not promoting the scheme. What I am interested in is general initiatives designed to ensure that the excellence of our outstanding schools is used to the benefit of the system."

David Hart, general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, said: "Heads have voted with their feet over school-centred teacher training. The vast majority have stayed with higher education and are running programmes in partnership with them."

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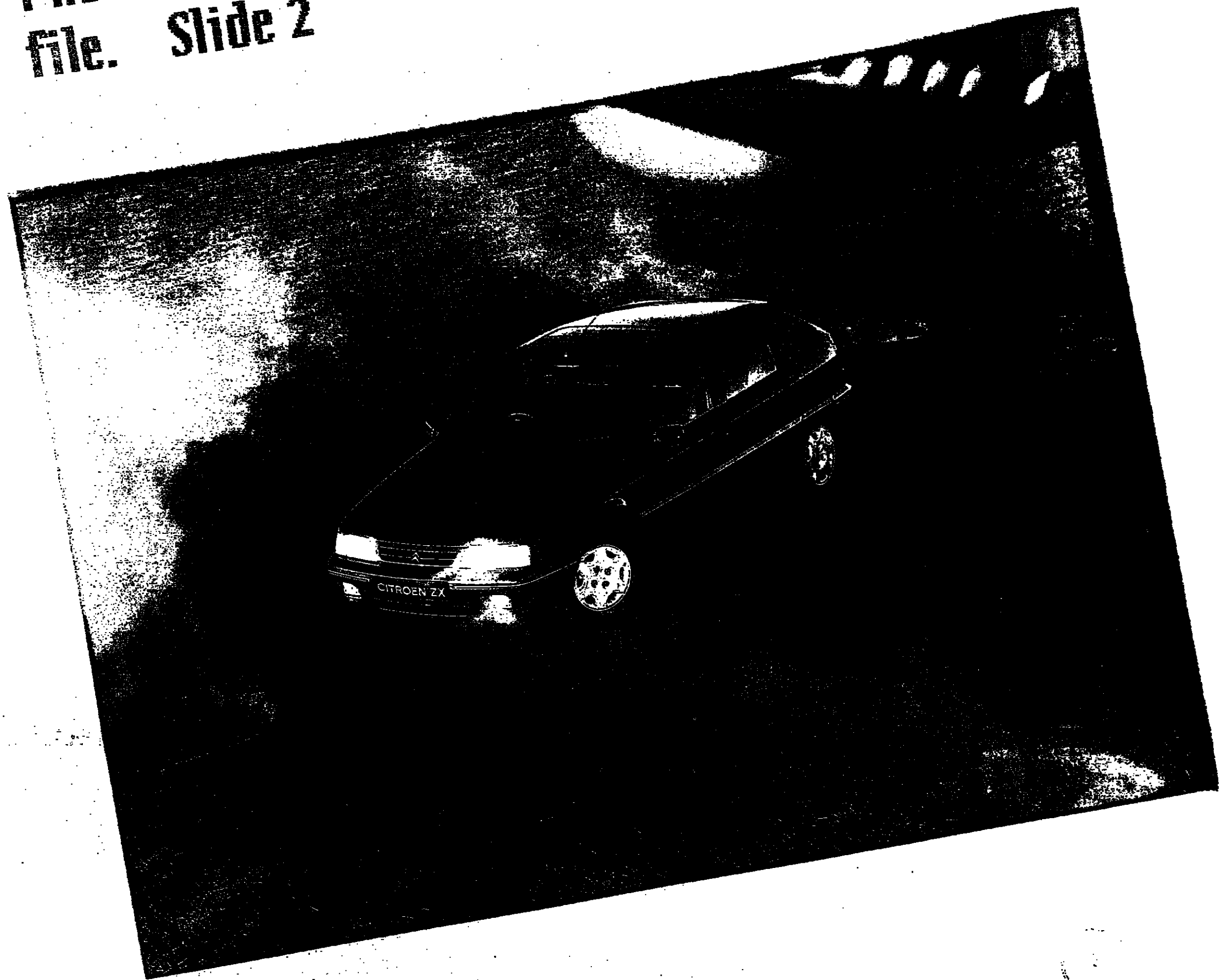
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Fran Abrams
Political Correspondent

He is becoming the political antithesis of Macavity the Mystery Cat. Wherever you may care to look, Peter Mandelson is there. The minister without portfolio, who already sits on several cabinet sub-committees and who is in charge of the Millennium Experience, is to make a bid for even more power. He plans to stand for election to Labour's ruling body, the National Executive

Committee. The move will be seen by Mandelson-watchers as the latest step along the route to political legitimacy for Tony Blair's arch-rival.

The architect of Labour's election campaign has become well known as a spin-doctor and as one of the figures famously described before the election by Clare Short, now Secretary of State for International Development, as "men who live in the dark." Now he plans to make his name as a far more public figure.

"I want to build on the election success through membership of the NEC. After modernising Labour, we need to bring about lasting change in Britain. The party and the Government working closely together is crucial to achieving this," he said.

There is no guarantee that he will be elected to the body. Last year Jack Straw, now Home Secretary, found himself without a seat and will not stand again.

An aide to Mr Mandelson said that although he was per-

ceived as being unpopular, this was not the case. "This is about setting out that he does have the support of the party. He spends a lot of time going around the country to constituencies and there is genuine warmth towards him," he said.

If he does achieve his aim, Mr Mandelson will sit alongside Robin Cook, David Blunkett, Mo Mowlam and Harriet Harman. Tony Blair and John Prescott have seats as leader and deputy leader. Gordon Brown's

decision to step down leaves a gap. The election will take place under the one member, one vote system, with ballot papers being posted out in August and the result being announced at the party conference in Brighton in October.

Mr Mandelson's role seems to have been constantly expanding since the election. There had been speculation that he would be put in charge of a spending department, but instead he was given his current

post in the Cabinet Office. Although he is not in the Cabinet, he apparently has more power than some who are. The cabinet committees on which he sits cover constitutional reform, London, home and social affairs, economic affairs, legislation, European issues, welfare to work and food safety. He is also responsible for the £590m Millennium Experience in Greenwich, south-east London.

Every morning Mr Mandelson chairs the daily media meeting for press officers and ministers. He has even taken to visiting departmental press offices to inspect their work.

There is considerable nervousness and even jealousy among Labour MPs about his position. Many believe he acts as the eyes and ears of the Prime Minister, and worry that when he speaks he may be speaking on Mr Blair's behalf.

It is expected that the number of "big names" on the NEC

will be scaled down in favour of more representation from the wider party. Ironically, the man at the heart of new Labour might only be able to sit on the NEC for a year in the seat he is seeking. If the party's latest modernisation plans go ahead, MPs will no longer be able to stand for the constituency section of the committee, although the Cabinet will be represented. Dennis Skinner and Diane Abbott are also likely to lose their seats.

MP sleaze report uses hard words

Christian Wolmar
Westminster Correspondent

The 900-page report on the cash-for-questions affair, which is expected to be highly critical of many of the 10 former-MPs involved, will be published tomorrow. Robert Sheldon, the new chairman of the Commons Standards and Privileges Committee, said that the language used by the report into the actions of the former MPs was "quite strong".

The 10 against whom allegations have been made will be given the chance to read the report from 10am and it will be published at 4pm. The most serious allegations have been made against five, all of whom were defeated at the elections. Neil Hamilton is alleged to have lied to the former deputy prime minister Michael Heseltine, but has consistently denied accepting cash to ask questions in Parliament on behalf of Mohamed al-Fayed.

Other former MPs whose behaviour is considered by the report include Sir Michael Grylls (former MP for Surrey North West) who received at least £86,000 from Mr Greer; Sir Andrew Bown (former MP for Brighton Kemptown) who admits failing to declare £5,319 given by Mr Fayed; and Michael Brown (former MP for Brigg and Cleethorpes) who did not declare £6,000 commission for lobbying for tobacco interests to the tax authorities until seven years after he received it; and Tim Smith, the former minister who resigned as candidate for Beaconsfield because he was alleged to have accepted around £18,000 in cash from Mr Fayed which he did not declare.

The report had been prepared by Sir Gordon Downey at the end of March, but its publication was delayed because Parliament was prorogued early by John Major, the outgoing prime minister. The subsequent row over Mr Major's decision cast a shadow over the whole Tory election campaign.

Mr Sheldon vowed to clean up sleaze and said: "I hope that by the end of this Parliament, the standing of MPs will be higher than it is at the beginning. That is the aim of this committee."

Great gun surrender begins as pistols become a weapon of the past



Guns on display at Belgravia police station, London, yesterday, at the start of Britain's biggest mass surrender of handguns. Some 160,000 large-calibre pistols were made illegal by the Firearms (Amendment) Act, which was passed following the Dunblane massacre. Photograph: Peter Macdiarmid

Labour fails to whip up support for 2000

Anthony Bevins
Political Editor

Only 32 Labour MPs – less than one-tenth of the Government's backbench strength – have so far backed a Whitehall-inspired Commons motion of confidence in the millennium celebrations.

A backbench motion tabled in the House last Thursday by Diana Organ, the new MP for Forest of Dean, was closely modelled on a press statement issued on the same day by Chris Smith, Secretary of State for National Heritage.

Mr Smith's parliamentary private secretary, Alice Mahon, has been one of the MPs going around the Commons, asking MPs to sign the motion.

But it is known that a number of Labour MPs have refused to support it, even though it has been put down as a simple statement of opinion, and is not debatable. There are 329 backbench Labour MPs who are not ministers or whips and are entitled to sign Commons motions, and 32 signatures is a poor showing for a policy that has been so strongly picked up by Tony Blair.

Another Commons motion, also tabled last Thursday and also featuring Mrs Organ as a sponsor, has so far been signed by 167 MPs – sending greetings and best wishes to Mukhtar Pakpahan, the imprisoned leader of an independent Indonesian trade union.

The fact that the "Millennium Experience" attracts less support than Mr Pakpahan will embarrass ministers, including Peter Mandelson, the Minister without Portfolio, who have been trying to whip up enthusiasm for the celebrations. The Commons motion was part of that exercise. The motion notes that the celebrations go beyond Greenwich to benefit the whole country, including the £200m Millennium Awards scheme, which "will help individuals fulfil personal goals".

In a press notice, also issued last Thursday, Mr Smith said that the awards scheme would "help individuals fulfil personal goals and put something back into their communities".

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Clarke dismisses referendum call

Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

Kenneth Clarke, the former chancellor, yesterday dismissed William Hague's call for a referendum on the outcome of the Amsterdam summit by saying that Britain was "becoming like Switzerland without the cowbells".

In the first signs of his readiness to speak his mind from the backbenches, Mr Clarke, the defeated challenger for the leadership, made it clear that he did not support the proposal by William Hague, the Conservative leader, for a referendum on the Inter-Governmental Conference.

The Independent has learned that Mr Hague had been prepared to offer Mr Clarke the deputy leadership, if he had been prepared to serve in his team, but Mr Clarke made it clear after the leadership election that he wanted to return to the backbenches.

Yesterday, Mr Clarke said on BBC radio that he did not want another "four or five years of collective discussion" as a member of the Shadow Cabinet. "When I looked at shadow government, I felt I've been there, done that; it's time, having been in government, to try to be an elder statesman," he said.

With a sideswipe at Baroness Thatcher, Mr Clarke denied he planned to match the brooding presence of Sir Edward Heath as a constant critic of his successor. "I think I'd behaved very much better towards Margaret than sometimes she behaved towards John [Major]," he said.

But he wasted no time in distancing himself from Mr Hague's call for a referendum. "I think we are having a lot of referendums in this country at the moment. Tony Blair seems keen on them as well. I sometimes think we are becoming like Switzerland without the cowbells," Mr Clarke said.

"I personally prefer the Parliamentary system. I am quite happy to listen to the arguments for a referendum on the Amsterdam treaty although I haven't had too many people pressing me to be allowed to have their say in a referendum." Mr Clarke said the time

would come when MPs would have the chance to debate the legislation that came from the decisions at the IGC. Mr Blair's office supported Mr Clarke in rejecting the idea of a referendum on the IGC, which Mr Hague called for at the Scottish Tory conference in Perth.

A Downing Street source said: "It's more to do with internal Tory Party politics than the IGC. What are we going to

have a referendum about? We said we would retain the veto and we did; we got a deal on border controls and fish, which the Tories failed to do when they were in office."

While praising Mr Hague for appointing a balanced Shadow Cabinet, Mr Clarke expressed the hope that Mr Hague would not "move further to the right into hardline Euroscepticism".

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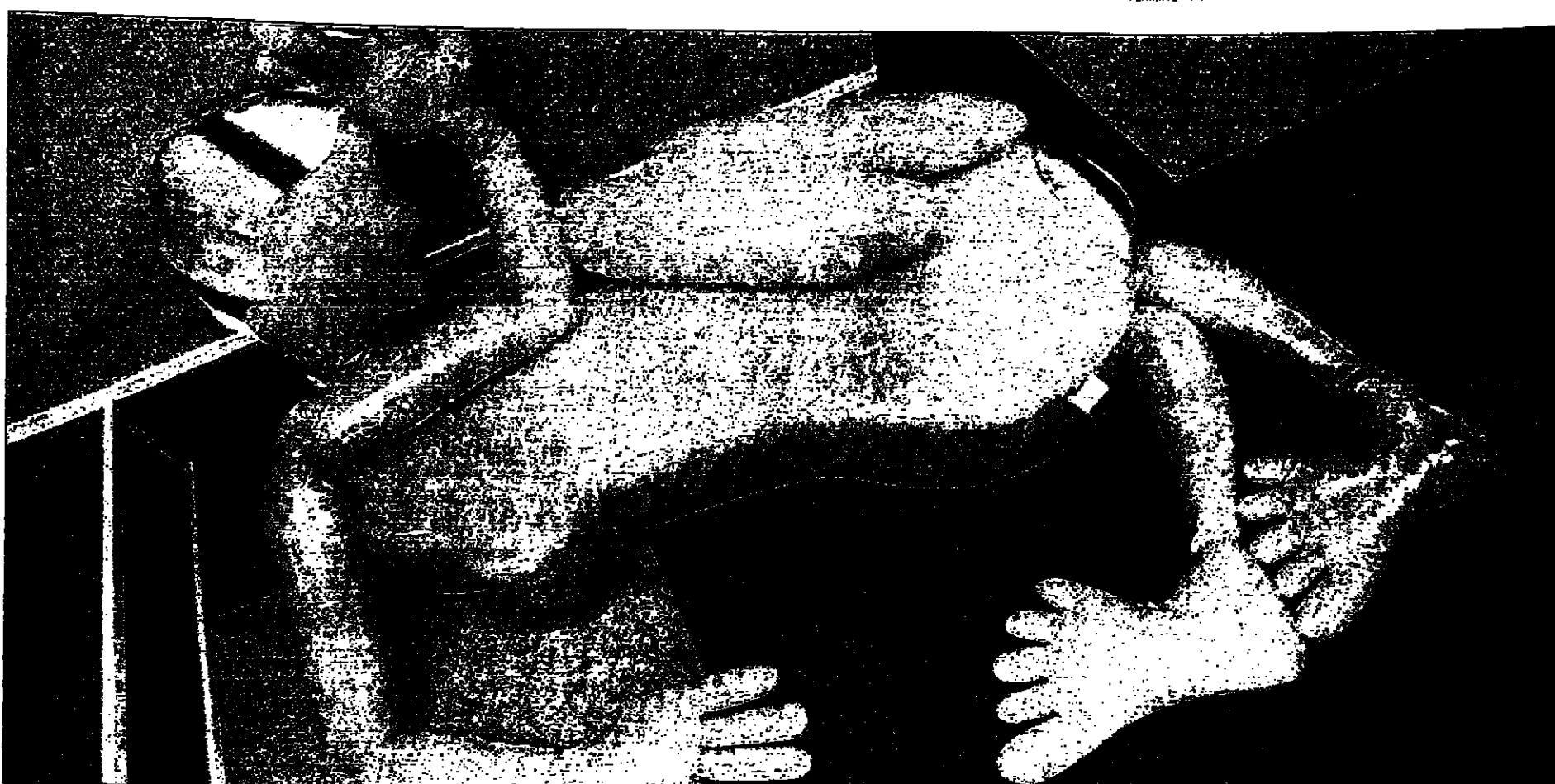
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Labour fails to whip up support for 2000

Anthony Bevins



Sitting pretty: A Ten-Element Settee Femme, designed in 1968 by Nicola, which will be auctioned by Christie's at its modern design sale tomorrow Photograph: Philip Meech

Burger King ends beef ban

Ian Burrell

The American fast food giant Burger King has agreed to end its ban on the use of British beef in its burgers.

The decision is worth £10 million a year to the beef industry which is already celebrating a vote of confidence from burger rival McDonald's worth £30 million.

Burger King said yesterday that its announcement was not merely a knee-jerk response to the McDonald's move, but was the result of lengthy negotiations with officials from the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, and the Northern Ireland and UK Meat and Livestock Commissions.

The fast food chain has asked officials and suppliers to set up a system of tracing meat and guaranteeing that it conforms to standards laid down by the company. Under the Burger King Quality Assurance Scheme, all meat used by the company would come from the flank and forequarters of animals less than 30 months old.

The National Farmers' Union described Burger King's decision as "fantastic news", but the families of many victims of new variant Creutzfeldt Jakob Disease remain convinced that their relatives contracted the disease from eating beef infected with BSE.

They are angry that the burger chains have given the impression that all British beef is safe.

But Burger King's managing director David Williams said the decision was based on research which showed 73 per cent of customers supported the return of British beef as long as the meat was backed up by a farm assurance scheme.

Up to 50 per cent of the beef used in our burgers will be British, the remainder will continue to come from approved suppliers in the EU meeting all UK requirements," he said.

Give us cash from defence, say police chiefs

Jason Bennett
Crime Correspondent

Money should be switched from the armed forces to the police to help fight crime and drug traffickers, the leader of the country's senior police officers demanded yesterday.

Ray White, President of the Association of Chief Police Officers and Chief Constable of Dyfed-Powys, argued that crime posed a greater threat to the country than foreign military forces. His comments drew immediate condemnation from the military.

It is believed to be the first time such a senior officer has directly targeted a rival service in an

per cent budget allocation for the police was not enough to provide extra bobbies on the beat and keep up with developments in technology such as DNA. He compared this with the huge amounts spent on the armed forces. He said: "I read of the debate about whether we should have three new smaller aircraft carriers or two larger ones and about how many jet fighters at £30m each we need for the Royal Air Force."

He said there was a strong case for greater investment in the police, and called on the Government to carry out a fundamental review of funding. "There are certainly many times and places in Britain in which the level of police coverage is worryingly low... The reality is that patrol resources are often thin to the point of invisibility."

Finally he added: "It is worth noting that in New York birthplace of zero tolerance, the policing level is more than twice as high as in Britain."

In a speech last night to the conference, Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, said he could not promise any extra resources for the police. Instead he called for greater efficiency and improved performance. "I will not make promises on extra resources which I cannot deliver. You will all know that the Government faces a difficult public expenditure climate. We all need to examine carefully whether we could implement our policy priorities more effectively and efficiently."

He went on to reiterate his support for Zero Tolerance policing to tackle disorderly neighbourhoods. He highlighted new evidence from the British Crime Survey that burglaries and violent crime were far more likely in areas of disorder. He said: "The risks of being a victim of violent crime are more than four times greater in a disorderly neighbourhood than an orderly one."

In response to recent criticism of Zero Tolerance by some chief officers Mr Straw said: "To those who say they are not in favour of Zero Tolerance, I say that I do not mind if you reject the term. But I firmly believe that all police officers should embrace the idea."

Several chief constables have criticised the use of the phrase Zero Tolerance, which they believe is being touted as a general panacea to all problems.

In what must be seen as a rebuttal Jack Straw said: "Like all good policing Zero Tolerance must be based on a clear strategy. Zero Tolerance won't work if it just means cracking down indiscriminately. Rather, Zero Tolerance policing requires partnership and it requires a clear focus on locally identified crime problems. Success will depend on being able to identify accurately what the crime problems are, and what effect police action is having."

Mr White argued that the 2

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news

The 'crumb' that could have exterminated the dinosaurs

Charles Arthur
Science Editor

An object like this may have brought an end to the reign of the dinosaurs 65 million years ago.

It is an interplanetary crumb, dating back to the formation of the solar system, which was never baked into the recipe of the rest of the planets; an asteroid, 33 miles across, whose surface reflects so little light that it is twice as dark as charcoal – meaning that only computer enhancement makes it visible.

The US space agency Nasa released the pictures, which were captured during a flypast of Asteroid 253 – or "Mathilde"

as it is better known. The images were taken by the Near Earth Asteroid Rendezvous (Near) spacecraft, 186 million miles from the sun – beyond the orbit of Mars. The Near spacecraft passed just 750 miles from Mathilde.

Its irregular shape includes many impact craters – some almost half as wide as its diameter – and show that Mathilde has "a very tortured past," according to Donald Yeomans of Nasa's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, who heads the radio science team observing the object.

The Nasa scientists have been surprised by the size and depth of the craters in the asteroid. The fact that it has not

broken apart, despite the apparent signs of damage, suggests that it is less dense, yet also more uniform, than a solid piece of rock.

The team have determined that it must be made of carbon-

rich material, and that it formed early in the creation of the solar system, but was not pulled in to any of the processes that formed the planets between 4 and 5 billion years ago.

Those would melt and mix

the materials of any object, making them increasingly reflective – that is, raising their albedo. The Earth, for example, reflects 33 per cent of the sun's light, meaning its albedo is 0.37. Mathilde rates just 0.03.

Mathilde lies, like millions of other asteroids, in the gap between Mars and Jupiter.

Occasionally some asteroids fall out of those orbits towards the planets; hundreds are believed to be scattered through-

out the solar system, some close enough to pose a threat to Earth.

Many scientists believe one such asteroid crashed into the Gulf of Mexico and caused drastic climate changes which

killed off the dinosaurs.

The data gathered in the latest fly-by may help scientists to detect them in future, and even to decide how best to deflect them from hitting Earth, if that becomes necessary.

Rock of ages: Could this barely visible "interplanetary crumb" have ended the reign of the dinosaurs?

Photograph: NASA

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Ship was wrecked 'for view of the coast'

The world's oldest working sailing ship was wrecked on the Cornish coast with the loss of three crew when her owner-captain took her close inshore to admire the coastline, a court heard yesterday.

Despite knowing the coast well, Mark Litchfield steered the 137-year-old *Maria Asumpta* on the course, regardless of adverse wind and tide conditions, claimed the prosecution lawyer, Richard Lissack, at Exeter Crown Court yesterday.

The 125-foot-long two-masted square rigger went aground on the "treacherous coastline" at Rumps Point outside Padstow Harbour on 30 May 1995, and broke up "almost immediately", said Mr Lissack.

Mr Litchfield, from Boxley, Kent, has pleaded not guilty to the manslaughter of the three members of the 14-strong crew who died. They were: Anne Taylor, 51 of Wallingford, Oxfordshire, the ship's cook; second engineer John Shannon, 30, from Queensland, Australia; and Emily MacFarlane, 19, of Felstead, Suffolk, an assistant bosun. The charges allege that Mr Litchfield, a former Royal Navy lieutenant, was in breach of a duty to take reasonable care of those who sailed in the vessel.

The prosecution lawyer said Mr Litchfield set the course, chose the route, decided all matters of navigation and ran all aspects of the vessel. "He would not brook any question of his authority," he told the court.

"Despite knowing the north Cornish coastline very well, he decided to take her close inshore regardless of the prevailing wind and tide which were adverse. He did this to admire the coastline, let those on

the cliffs admire the *Maria Asumpta*, and to use up some time as they were ahead of schedule," he said.

"In taking her close inshore, Litchfield put the vessel on a lee shore – a situation where the wind was blowing towards the shore to which you are close."

Mr Litchfield, he said, broke two of the golden rules of sailing. Always maintain a good distance off, and never get caught on a lee shore. Throughout that afternoon he had every chance to tack out to sea and put distance between the vessel and the shore. "He chose not to despite the obvious hazards that loomed," Mr Lissack told the jury.

"His navigation of the latter stages of the course was totally inadequate. He used the wrong charts, with no passage drawn, and no attempt to mark off no-go areas," said Mr Lissack.

Mr Litchfield "did not even take the simple step of ordering the crew to put on lifejackets despite the fact that the grounding of the vessel with the obvious risk to life was a possibility," Mr Lissack claimed.

Mr Lissack said a square-rig vessel was particularly vulnerable on a lee shore, and for some hours before her loss the *Maria Asumpta* was fighting adverse wind and tide and being progressively set in on a lee shore.

Mr Litchfield, who had bought the *Maria Asumpta* in 1980 after a film company asked him to provide two square-riggers, had no square-rigger specific qualifications, said Mr Lissack. But he knew more about sailing the *Maria Asumpta* than anyone else, and spoke of the vessel as "his baby". The case continues.

DAILY POEM

Song to 'Springtime in the Mansion of Jade' (Yu-lou chun)

By Yan Ji-dao (mid 11th – early 12th century)

The east wind did it again, unsentimental
in its designs: it blew the land full of petals,
passionate red and fetching white.
High in green mansions curtain shadows won't block away
melancholy – same mood as last year
on the same day.

You'd never know how I've always botched
spring's last moments so badly, with wasted tears
climbing high places everywhere.
But this time I'll have my golden flagon
filled to the rim. How often drunk hereafter
will I watch the blossoms all fall away?

Yan Ji-dao was the last master of the traditional Song Dynasty love lyric, associated with the singer-courtesans who worked in the "entertainment quarters" of cities such as the Song capital, Kai-feng. Stephen Owen's translations of Yan's poetry appear in his *Anthology of Chinese Literature: Beginnings to 1911* (Norton, £18.95).

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Kohl acts to quash revolt over the euro

Inure Karacs
Bonn

Chancellor Helmut Kohl sought to quell a Euro-sceptic rebellion in the government ranks yesterday by mortgaging his political future to hard-liners who insist on the strictest interpretation of the Maastricht criteria.

Although Germany has no chance of keeping its budget deficit below 3 per cent this year, Mr Kohl insisted the goal remained within his reach. "We are sticking to three-point-zero. That is no problem. And within the schedule," he said in Munich.

Addressing a conference of business leaders, his words were aimed primarily at Bavaria's Prime Minister, Edmund Stoiber, who has emerged as the most powerful adversary of economic and monetary union (EMU), even urging postponement if the criteria were not met.

Mr Kohl had gone to Munich carrying a speech denouncing the "unhelpfulness" of government politicians who question the government's ability to deliver the magic numbers. But at a crucial point in the speech, he departed from the prepared text, serving up soothing words rather than admonition to his foe.

Mr Stoiber was generous in victory, welcoming Mr Kohl to the inner sanctum of the "three-point-nought" club with open arms. "I am happy that it will be three point zero," he said with not a hint of irony.

Most economists, European governments and even the Bundesbank maintain that a few tenths of 1 per cent do not matter, and are perplexed by the Bavarians' "decimal-fetishism".

"A euro that is permanently stable is in Germany's interests," the Bavarian leader declared last week. "To pursue a course of relaxing the standards would lead to a union of inflation and debt, and harm our nation, and ultimately European integration."

Mr Stoiber went on to promise "force resistance" to German attempts to fudge the criteria - a thinly veiled threat to mobilise his MPs against monetary union. His remarks unleashed fury in the government. Mr Kohl let it be known discreetly that he was hopping mad. Wolfgang Gerhardt, leader of the Free Democrats, the third party making up the coalition, charged Mr Stoiber with "anti-euro populism".

The row could not have come at a worse time for Mr Kohl. The



Word games: Helmut Kohl and Edmund Stoiber clash at the Bavarian Entrepreneurs Congress in Munich

Photograph: AFP

recent confrontation with the Bundesbank has highlighted his government's inability to meet the Maastricht targets by honest means, and, by extension, its commitment to a hard euro.

His conversion to 3.0 is likely to defuse the row for the moment, but stores up greater calamities for the future. Mr

Stoiber will not get off his hobby-horse, because the issue is part of a bigger game. In reality, decimals have nothing to do with the euro-debate, but a great deal with *realpolitik*. Mr Stoiber governs the most Euro-sceptic and most conservative Land in Germany. EMU is unpopular, especially among right-wing voters.

The ruling Christian Social Union is in danger of losing its absolute majority in next year's elections to the Bavarian assembly. The biggest threat to Mr Stoiber's survival comes not from the left, but from mushrooming anti-party alliances which are bitterly opposed to all things federal and European.

That is one reason why the CSU, whose MPs prop up Mr Kohl's government in Bonn, cannot afford to go soft on the euro. Reason number two is more Byzantine. The person widely blamed for Germany's failure to meet the criteria is the finance minister, Theo Waigel, also a Bavarian.

There is little love lost between the two CSU heavyweights, and Mr Stoiber seems to take pleasure in advertising his rival's shortcomings. The failure to deliver 3.0 this year will be the most obvious Waigel legacy, which is why Mr Stoiber will never let the magic number slip out of public sight.

Dutch to make brothels legal

Katherine Butler

The Dutch government is to legalise brothels in a move it says will help stem the growth of sex slavery and women-trafficking rackets operating out of Eastern Europe.

The Dutch Justice minister, Winnie Sorgdrager, who was tabling a decriminalisation Bill yesterday, said the decision was a mature response to a phenomenon which is here to stay. "The existence of prostitution is a fact which must also be accepted by the government. This demands a realistic approach to the problem."

Ms Sorgdrager hopes the change in the law will for the first time allow police and law enforcement agencies to regulate the sex industry and weed out the East European drug and organised crime rings who are thought to be controlling much of Holland's prostitution.

The Netherlands has for years adopted a policy of tolerance towards brothels. However, much though this might surprise tourists to Amsterdam's red-light area, brothels are still officially illegal. Under the Bill, which is expected to win majority backing in the Dutch parliament despite opposition from right-wing and Christian parties, brothels will become part of the mainstream taxpaying economy.

Brothel keepers will have to apply for permits to run their businesses from local councils and will be subject to close scrutiny.

Keeping a register of brothels will allow the authorities to keep a rigorous check on the identity of the 30,000 or so individuals working as prostitutes, half of whom are believed to be illegal immigrants. Penalties for illegal prostitution and child pornography rackets will be toughened under the new law.

European Commission officials who co-ordinate justice links between the member states are sceptical of the plans. "This is a peculiarly Dutch solution, and definitely not one which will be followed by other governments," commented one senior official.

Defeated Berisha's supporters cling to gun-power

Andrew Gumbel
Tirana

Die-hard supporters of Albania's President Sali Berisha vented their frustration over the ruling Democratic Party's crushing electoral defeat yesterday with an intimidatory show of force around Tirana. They showed special venom for foreign journalists in the capital by barging into news conferences with guns and throwing well-aimed punches.

An Italian cameraman was beaten outside the Democratic Party's headquarters on Monday night and had his equipment stolen, as party faithful lurled accusations of bias at the foreign press. An observer for Human Rights Watch who had been critical of the Berisha

regime, Fred Abrahams, was slapped and kicked during a news conference yesterday given by two senior party figures, Genc Pollo and Tritan Shehu.

Joanna Robertson, a reporter for the BBC and the *Guardian*, was fired at several times by an unidentified man emerging from a Mercedes on a beach near Durres. She escaped unhurt after the owner of a nearby restaurant, who knew her, chased the man away with blasts from his Kalashnikov.

Although President Berisha has urged his supporters to accept the election result, which handed an overwhelming victory to the opposition Socialist Party, the men with guns have managed to clear the streets a good hour before the start of curfew at 10pm.

On Monday night, men identified as members of the presidential guard drove up and down Tirana's main boulevard firing automatic weapons into the air. Another group climbed to the top of the Palace of Culture and created a cacophony of machine-gun fire and grenade explosions.

Such behaviour is being interpreted as the last gasp of

an autocratic regime that knows the game is up. A number of notorious strongmen, including the police chief Agim Shehu and the head of the presidential guard, Xhabid Xhaferri, have left the country. President Berisha himself was described as looking dejected and lost by international officials who met him yesterday.

The risk of serious disruption

nevertheless exists, especially during the limbo period before full election results are known. Yesterday the would-be king of Albania, Leka Zogu, gave a press conference accompanied by about 200 thugs, many of them armed, who chanted slogans and applauded as their hero complained he had been robbed of victory in Sunday's referendum on the reintroduc-

tion of the monarchy. Some of the thugs were identified as members of Mr Berisha's retinue.

Complete results are not expected until today because of delays in communication between far-flung constituencies and the central electoral commission in Tirana. The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe said

the count appeared to be conducted professionally. Latest indications suggested there would be more than 30 run-offs in the second round this Sunday, and up to 20 re-runs because of irregularities or outbreaks of violence. The Socialists still appeared to have a commanding majority, but not as big as the results announced by the party on Monday.

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India's master of corruption plots his revenge

Peter Popham
Delhi

India's most scandalously bent politician, Laloo Yadav, Chief Minister of the impoverished state of Bihar, finally got his come-uppance on 27 April, when he was told he was to be prosecuted for his role in a £1.6bn embezzlement scandal.

On 21 July he is likely to be arrested. But he appears to have got partial revenge: the man responsible for the decision to prosecute him, Joginder Singh, Director of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), has been removed without warning

from his post. Mr Yadav is the nightmare of Indian caste politics made flesh. The child of illiterate cowherds - Yadav is also the name of the caste, and cowherding their prescribed occupation - he took advantage of the crumbling of the Congress Party and the bitterness of Bihar's poor to become Chief Minister in 1990.

The secret of his appeal is simple: the idea, repeated like a mantra, that I am as you are. He slops about in white pyjamas, betel juice dribbling down his lips, cursing like a rustic roughneck. I am as you are, he says - and so saying he has plundered his home state with such ruthlessness that

Indians come away aghast. Roads are disintegrating and bandits roam the countryside; inter-caste violence is endemic. When he came to power, Mr Yadav's mandate was to improve the lot of the poor. So he has done: he distributed £34m of saris and dhotis to them. Once he met a beggar on the roadside and packed him off to a five-star hotel for a bath and meal.

He hates attending to files, so thousands of them gather dust. He fills the bureaucracy with cronies and the better civil servants quit in disgust; he recruits 6,000 Yadavs as policemen to keep order his way.

He is Finance Minister as well as Chief Minister, and the scandals over which he has presided include a £300m theft from the bitumen fund, the transfer of £600m of state-owned land to a handful of builders and a £150m drugs scandal. But they are dwarfed by the siphoning of £1.6bn out of the state treasury through a fund intended to subsidise the purchase of animal fodder.

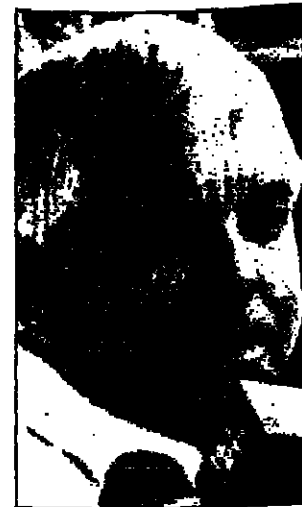
Although evidence was destroyed in a fire and potential witnesses died in suspicious circumstances, in April Mr Yadav learned he will not cheat justice indefinitely. After blustering and refusing to resign, he has ap-

parently struck back. Mr Singh, who was responsible for the decision to prosecute Mr Yadav, was on Monday kicked sideways into the Home Ministry. That Mr Singh has been sacrificed despite Mr Yadav's waning influence is due to the fact that in his 11-month tenure he alienated nearly all the country's most powerful politicians.

In contrast to the compliant types who held the post in recent years, he went after crooked politicians and businessmen with righteous fury: one source claims he destroyed 43 political careers, though successful prosecutions have been few. Those he has

not hurt he angered by his addiction to publicity and apparent contempt for parliament. Now the politicians have got their own back. Since Indira Gandhi's time, directorship of the CBI has been in the gift of the prime minister and Prime Minister I.K. Gujral has obliged Mr Yadav - who happens to be president of Mr Gujral's own party, the Janata Dal - and many others in his 14-party United Front by removing Mr Singh.

Mr Singh is despised in the capital. But someone had to tell Laloo Yadav where to get off. Whether Mr Singh's successor will have those sort of guts will soon be discovered.



Yadav: Enjoyed seeing his prosecutor sacked

Sex scandal saga swings in Clinton's favour

Mary Dejevsky
Washington

As he muddled saga of the President and Paula Jones - the Arkansas receptionist who alleges improper advances in a Little Rock hotel room - chambers slowly in the direction of the courtroom confrontation for which all America lusts, the balance of advantage is unexpectedly shifting in President Bill Clinton's favour.

In recent days, a series of new claims has called into question some of the allegations made against Mr Clinton - allegations regarded hitherto as the only solid elements in ever-shifting sands of unverifiable accusations.

At the centre of the claims is a group of Arkansas state troopers who belonged to Mr Clinton's security detail in 1991, when he was state governor and when Ms Jones says she was called to a room at the Excelsior hotel and asked for oral sex.

Several of the troopers had claimed

that they regularly procured women for Mr Clinton while he was governor of Arkansas, and kept guard outside hotel rooms while he took his pleasure. They had supplied this information to the anti-Clinton magazine, *The American Spectator*, among others, which printed its exposé about Mr Clinton's Arkansas years soon after he came to office in 1993.

Now, one of the troopers, Ronald Anderson, stands accused by his one-time lawyer in the *New Yorker* magazine of wrongly verifying his colleagues' tales of Mr Clinton's infidelities in the hope that they would all profit. A second trooper, Danny Ferguson, who is said to have taken Ms Jones to the hotel room, reportedly tried to sell his story first for \$1m.

Then last week, the generally pro-Clinton *Washington Post* disclosed that Kenneth Starr, the independent prosecutor appointed to look into another Clinton "scandal" - the Whitewater land deal - was extending his investi-



Starr: Bill Clinton at the show 'A funny thing happened on the way to the forum' in New York. Photograph: Reuters

gations to include Mr Clinton's past sex-life. This time, too, the information came from former state troopers, who said they had recently been questioned on the subject.

The *Washington Post* story led to an outcry from an American public that is firmly of the view that Mr Clinton's past sex-life is none of Mr Starr's business.

A third shift in Mr Clinton's favour was provided by the resignation of Daniel Traylor as Ms Jones's Arkansas lawyer. He said he disliked the approach of the Jones family, and complained that Ms Jones's charge - that she had observed "distinguishing characteristics" on Mr Clinton's private parts - had not featured in her original testimony to him. Thus is Ms Jones's veracity called into question.

The conjunction of these developments raises many questions. Why is the truthfulness of the troopers being challenged now? Did anyone suggest to Mr Traylor that he might step down? And what has Mr Clinton's lawyer, Bob Bennett, been doing recently?

significant shorts

Eta hostages freed after months in captivity

Two long-term hostages held by Eta terrorists were freed within hours of each other yesterday, in the most spectacular development for months in the Spanish government's campaign against Basque separatists. Cosme Delclaux, a lawyer from a prosperous Basque family, was found tied to a tree near Durango following a tip-off, after being held captive for more than seven months. Shortly afterwards, the prison officer Jose Antonio Ortega Lara was freed after a record 18 months in captivity, was freed after a raid by the paramilitary Civil Guard on an industrial warehouse near Mondragon. It is thought that security forces had located Mr Ortega's whereabouts weeks ago, and delayed a rescue operation until Mr Delclaux was safe. Mr Delclaux's family is reported to have paid a ransom of £50m some time ago. Elizabeth Nash - Madrid

Palestinians shot in 'pig' protest

Israeli soldiers shot and wounded at least 34 Palestinians in another flare-up of violence over posters depicting the Prophet Mohammad as a pig. Two Israeli soldiers were wounded in an explosion outside a Jewish settler compound in the divided West Bank city. Dozens of Arab youths broke away from a peaceful protest which Palestinian dignitaries called in response to the discovery of the posters, and threw rocks and petrol bombs at soldiers and settlers. Soldiers responded by firing rubber-coated metal bullets. Israeli police on Saturday arrested a 25-year-old Jewish woman from Jerusalem on suspicion of pasting the posters. Reuters - Hebron

Belarus bans private lawyers

Belarus' authoritarian president banned private lawyers from practice. President Alexander Lukashenko's order requires all lawyers to apply for a state licence if they want to continue working. The licensed lawyers will work with government-controlled associations of lawyers. The order also bans private notaries. AP - Moscow

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Hong Kong 香港 handover

Day one and the new recruits wake

Protest passes peacefully as Tung seeks to reassure

Teresa Poole
Hong Kong

Hong Kong's first day under Chinese rule brought the chance to rally against the Peking government, applaud new commitments on social welfare, and join in a mass sing-along aimed at setting a new world karaoke record. And all of this in torrential rain.

The afternoon demonstration, with a lead placard reading "Put an end to one-party dictatorship, build a democratic China", saw an estimated 3,000 people march in the first test of tolerance in the new era. It represented the first such protest on Chinese soil since the June 1989 Tiananmen Square crackdown. The protesters walked through the central business district, shouting "We want democracy, we want it now".

New legislation passed in the early hours of yesterday requires demonstrators to obtain prior permission from the police. This rally had secured an official go-ahead and, while there was a heavy police presence, it passed off peacefully.

As life attempted to get back to normal, Tung Chee-hwa, Hong Kong's new leader, outlined in a lengthy speech the priorities for the new Special Administrative Region (SAR) government. After the previous day's emphasis on patriotism, Mr Tung yesterday got down to the business of how he intended to run Hong Kong, hopeful that by addressing the issues which dominate people's daily lives, he can begin to establish his legitimacy.

"Beneath the surface of prosperity, there are insidious threats which are taxing our courage and determination," Mr Tung warned. "We have to resolve a series of social problems arising from a growing and ageing population, meet the pressing demands for more and better

housing, and deal with the employment dislocation due to the restructuring of the economy."

Hong Kong's elderly "deserved respect", said Mr Tung. "We would encourage families to live with their elderly members, through adjustments to the public housing allocation policies," he added.

Mr Tung tried to balance calls for a better understanding of China with the need to reassure



'We strive for liberty, but not at the expense of the law'

Tung Chee-hwa

Hong Kong people that the territory's autonomy would be respected by Peking. "Due to our long separation, there is a general lack of understanding about China among the people of Hong Kong", and this must be addressed "to create mutual trust and respect".

On the question of Hong Kong's political development, he affirmed that "democracy is the hallmark of a new era for Hong Kong". He outlined an image of the sort of conservative Chinese society which he would like to create, while stressing that Hong

Kong was a cosmopolitan society and must retain its international outlook.

"We will continue to encourage diversity in our society, but we must also reaffirm and respect the fine traditional Chinese values including filial piety, love for the family, modesty and integrity, and desire for continuous improvement. We value plurality, but discourage open confrontation. We strive for liberty, but not at the expense of the rule of law. We respect minority views, but are mindful of wider interests. We protect individual rights, but also shoulder collective responsibilities," he said.

President Jiang Zemin also adopted a less jingoistic tone than on Monday night, seeking this time to reassure Hong Kong that it would retain a distinct system from the mainland for 50 years. He spoke of an "ultimate aim" of Hong Kong having an elected chief executive and legislature - but gave no idea of the acceptable timescale. He too offered an inclusive message for Hong Kong's non-Chinese residents, promising that "everyone will be entitled to the rights and freedom as protected by law, regardless of race or colour".

As the first day under Chinese rule drew to a close last night, there was still enough energy left for another party. Up to a million people lined both sides of Victoria Harbour for a HK\$100m (£7.8m) extravaganza laser and firework show, which saw 20 tonnes of explosives light up the night sky. And, being Hong Kong, there was something a little different to wind up the evening. The organisers orchestrated a city-wide sing-along, in pursuit of an accolade fit for the new era - a Guinness Book of Records entry for the world's largest mass karaoke.



Test of tolerance: Some of the 3,000 demonstrators on the streets of Hong Kong yesterday calling for the end of China's 'one-party dictatorship' Photograph: Reuters

Worries temper the optimism

Steve Crawshaw
Hong Kong

And now, what? That question now hangs over Hong Kong. But there is little chance of a speedy answer.

This will be a period of testing the limits, on both sides. Thousands of Hong Kongers tested the limits yesterday, demonstrating under the slogan "Build a democratic China!" There were no arrests - as there would have been, within seconds, if such a protest march had taken place in mainland China. But it was clear from the start that change will be much more gradual, when it comes.

Mainland China, which has never administered a free-thinking society even at one remove, will undoubtedly try to see with how far it can push Hong Kongers. "One country, two systems" is the official pledge. On the economy, China is undoubtedly serious. In the much quoted phrase, China has no reason to kill the golden-egg-laying goose, by tampering with Hong Kong's money-making possibilities. On politics, however, it is still unclear whether China understands that politically free-range eggs are liable to be much tastier.

Lee Cheuk-yan, an organiser of yesterday's protest march in Hong Kong, insisted that there was a basic principle at stake. "What we've done in the past, we should be able to do in the future." New public order laws, passed by Hong Kong's new China-appointed legislature, make it more difficult to protest. And yet the official line appears to be that all will still be allowed. And yet, Tung Chee-hwa, the new Peking-approved chief executive, spoke in ambiguous terms yesterday when he talked of valuing plurality, but discouraging "open confrontation".

It would be wrong to describe Hong Kong today as a place of pessimism. There is general satisfaction in the obvious truth: Hong Kong belongs to China, just as it always should have done. Trickier is the question of whether Hong Kong wishes to be part of the People's Republic of China - in other words, subject to the regime which currently rules China. That regime believes itself to be eternal, but may in reality have a finite lifespan.

Hong Kong is a place of changing worries, combined with extraordinary optimism. Many Hong Kongers are grateful for what the outgoing governor, Chris Patten, did for democratic rights in Hong Kong. Many ways, however, the final departure of the Mr Patten and the removal of the last royal cross across the territory, make it easier for Hong Kongers. Now they can roll up their sleeves not just economically but also politically, knowing that the future is in their own hands, and is not affected by anybody, benevolently or otherwise, from London.

Theoretically, the future does not just depend on Hong Kong. Yesterday, the Chinese flag was being raised on official buildings all over Hong Kong. China, I can be argued, might change Hong Kong's future with just a few tanks, if it decided that the democrats were becoming too bold - just as Moscow sought to do in Czechoslovakia in 1968 or as China itself did, when lethally crushing the Tiananmen democracy movement in 1989. But the Soviet invasion rebounded on Moscow. And the chapter on the legacy of Tiananmen is by no means finished. Peking's official version is that Tiananmen Square is now forgotten by all in China. But Peking's actions in suppressing dissent make it clear that China itself knows this to be a lie.



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Photograph: David Rose

Ted Plafker
Peking

Speaking to several thousand guests at an afternoon reception in Peking's Great Hall of the People, Mr Li praised the "one country, two systems" formula under which Hong Kong returned to Chinese sovereignty.

"The Republic of China government

Yesterday, Peking was unusually quiet as residents took advantage of a second consecutive day off to recover from a long night spent celebrating the hand-over. Few cars plied the city's streets, and morning papers were late in reaching the news-stands, but Pekingers remained excited about the dramatic events that continued unfolding in Hong Kong.

State-run television continued re-broadcasting highlights from its marathon overnight coverage of the midnight formalities and of the rainsoaked daybreak entry into Hong Kong of 4,000 People's Liberation Army troops.

We have been waiting for the handover so long that there was always a danger it might be an anti-climax. It was not. Desor-

Letters, page 1

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obituaries / gazette

Sir Joshua Hassan

Sir Joshua Hassan, Gibraltar's first Chief Minister, dominated the life of the Rock throughout a political career that spanned 40 years. With his encouragement, Gibraltarians, who for nearly three centuries had passively fulfilled their role as loyal servants of the British garrison, developed a proud sense of identity and a desire for emancipation that continues to cause headaches both in Whitehall and in Madrid.

He was the first Gibraltar leader to assert that only the inhabitants of the Rock had the right to decide their future. He was, in that sense, the mould of a number of leaders throughout the British Empire who contributed to the process of post-war decolonisation. One of the last steps in that process took place in Hong Kong on the day he died.

Young Joshua Hassan was spurred to political action by the painful experience in the Second World War when thousands of non-combatant Gibraltarians, women, children and old men – most of the Rock's population – were shipped off to be billeted around the world, to Madeira, Northern Ireland, Jamaica and London.

Hassan, who volunteered as a gunner in the Gibraltar Defence Force, shared the suspicion of many that Britain was quietly planning not to bring the evacuees home, a decision that that would have condemned thousands of families to misery and destroyed the community.

Hassan, trained as a lawyer in the Middle Temple and called to the Bar in 1939, launched the Association for the Advancement of Civil Rights in 1942 to campaign for the evacuees' return. Many Gibraltarians of a certain age recount with pain the uncertainty of a childhood spent far from home, without their fathers, an experience reflected in a myriad exotic regional accents that spice Gibraltarians' spoken English.

The campaign's success spawned a wider movement that combined aspirations for emancipation with a passionate desire to remain British. This paradoxical combination encapsulates the political will of most Gibraltarians today, and is explained by the fact that the Rock's desire for a voice of its own, apart from Britain, is matched only by its fierce refusal to be ceded to Spain, in accordance with the 1713 Treaty of Utrecht.

Twice in the 1960s, Hassan – regarded as a radical if not a revolutionary – led petitioners from the Rock to testify in New York before the United Nations Committee on Decolonisation, insisting that the vast majority of his compatriots wanted to re-

main British. In 1967 he put his principle to the test with a referendum on the colony's future. The public's verdict was overwhelming – 12,138 votes in favour of remaining with Britain, and only 44 votes against.

"With Britain but not under Britain. The Right to our Land" were the twin slogans that inspired Hassan as head of the city and legislative councils for most of the years between 1945 and 1969. The bodies merged into the House of Assembly in the constitution of 1969, his crowning achievement.

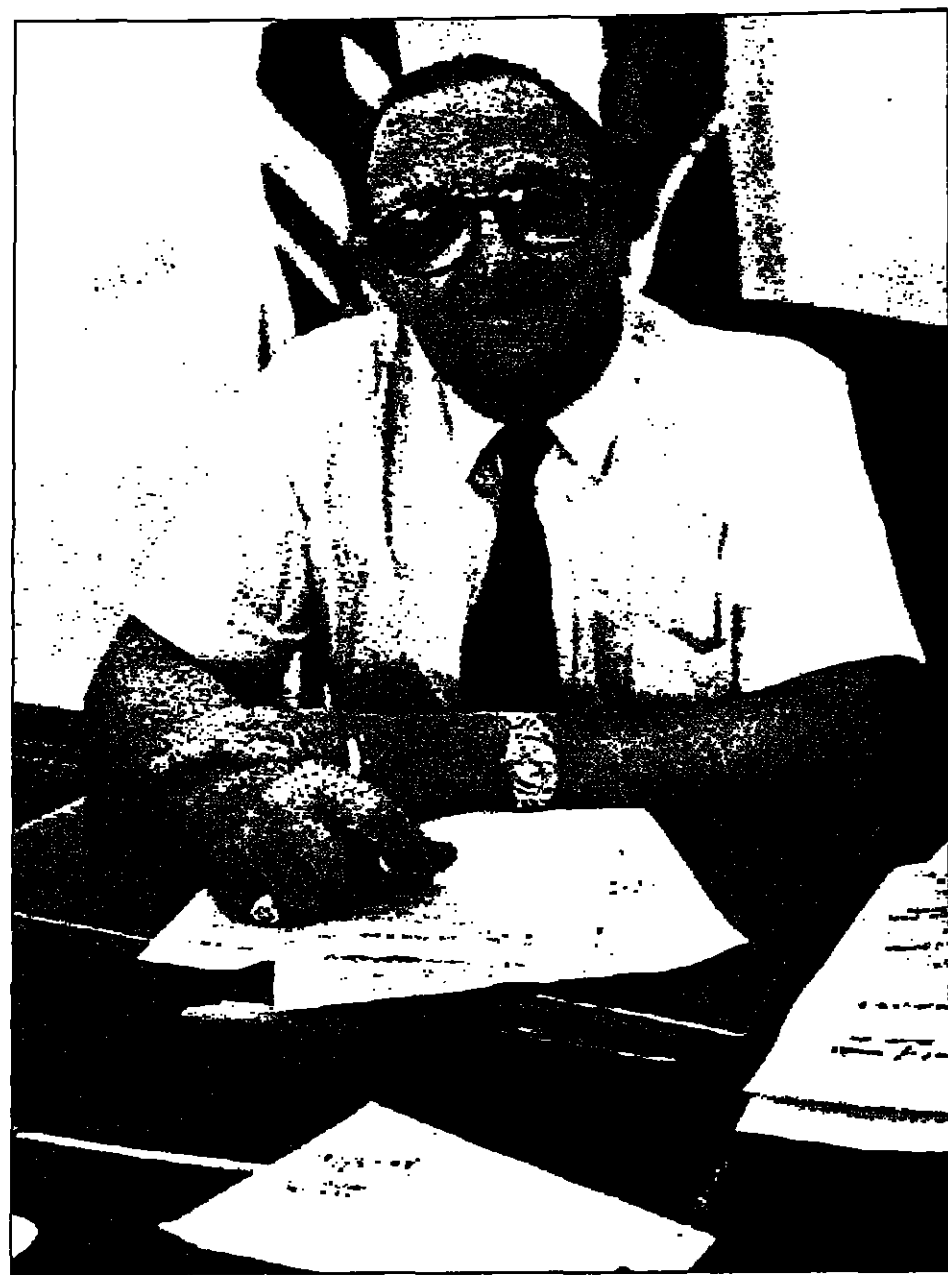
At the core of the constitution, which continues to govern the Rock, is Britain's pledge that it would "never enter into arrangements under which the people of Gibraltar would pass under the sovereignty of another state against their freely and democratically expressed wishes". This pledge, as today's Chief Minister, Peter Caruana, said recently, "has been repeated to us by every successive British government", and forms the core of policy towards Spain's persistent claims to sovereignty.

In response to this gesture of defiance, Spain's dictator Francisco Franco sealed off the border. Links between Spain and Gibraltar remained cut until 1985, more than nine years after Franco's death, when Madrid was negotiating its entry into the European Community.

After five years as chief minister, Hassan lost the post in the 1969 general election – his only electoral defeat – when his party failed by one seat to win a majority. But he was voted back in 1972 and remained for the next 15 years. The manner of his departure from office cast some things of a shadow over his long career. It followed the breakdown in 1987 of the 1983 airport agreement with Madrid. In 1987, Gibraltar was excluded from a Europe-wide attempt to liberalise air travel – the price for preventing the collapse of the initiative – and its airport was closed for flights to anywhere except Britain. This was a terrible blow to Gibraltar, and prompted mass protests in which Hassan was accused of betrayal.

He retired from politics soon afterwards, citing personal reasons, aged 71 and past his prime. Joshua Hassan was always an open and accessible man, greeting people on the street of his little colony, and claiming to know the names of most of them, and never forgetting the working-class unions who launched him into power. His weakness, critics say, was to allow his deep loyalty to Britain to translate into an over-conciliatory attitude to the Foreign Office.

"Working so closely with FCO ministers and officials, he ended up believing in everything they tried to sell him. The establishment swallowed him up," is the verdict of his political opponent for more than 15 years, the intransigent old warhorse Joe Bossano.



Hassan: "Gibraltar's future is bound up with Britain and Spain. The British connection is vital"

With passion, he described himself as "100 per cent Sephardic Jew. Hassan is normally an Arab first name; but, in the Jewish tradition, it is a surname. In my case, there is no possible confusion. With first names like Joshua and Abraham, nobody could think I am anything but a Jew. My family has a history of nearly 300 years in Gibraltar. They arrived from Morocco in 1728, and some came earlier from Minorca."

"It was my policy to develop good working relations with both Britain and Spain," he told me. "That does not mean that there was any give-away. But we have to live with the Spaniards. They are our neighbours. I doubt whether Gibraltar would be viable as an independent state against the wishes of 40 million Spaniards. Our future is bound up with both Britain and Spain. The British connection is vital. The Spanish connection is desirable: the reality of the geography is inescapable."

"My objective was to try to convince the Spanish to accept the British Gibraltarian and to lead them away from an attitude towards us that is now 300

years old. On the other hand, the treaty of Utrecht is Britain's title to Gibraltar. So Britain has to respect and adhere to its obligations under it. The day that they cease to do so, the Spanish would have every right to walk in our door."

What I asked Hassan finally, did he think was the destiny of Gibraltar?

"I am not a prophet," he said. "Only an expired politician. So we shall have to wait and see."

Joshua Abraham Hassan, lawyer and politician; born Gibraltar 21 August 1915; called to the Bar, Middle Temple 1939; HM Deputy Coroner, Gibraltar 1941-64; Mayor of Gibraltar 1945-50, 1953-69; member, Executive Council, Gibraltar 1950-64; Chief Member, Legislative Council 1950-64; LVO 1954; CBE 1957; GBE 1988; QC (Gibraltar) 1961; Ki 1963; Chief Minister of Gibraltar 1964-69, 1972-87; Leader of the Opposition, Gibraltar House of Assembly 1969-72; KCMG 1986; Chairman, Gibraltar Bar Council 1992-95; married 1945 Daniela Salazar (two daughters; marriage dissolved 1969); 1969 Marcelle Beniston (two daughters); died Gibraltar 1 July 1997.

Professor Leonard Strang

Leonard Strang was a man of prodigious talent – passionately engaged with life in all its aspects to the last.

The term "paediatrician-scientist" may come close to encompassing the scope of a professional life devoted to research into the problems of the newborn infant and to the care of sick children; but it fails to identify Strang's unique ability to fuse these two often disparate disciplines of research and practice – bringing his understanding of physiological science to bear on clinical problems long before the term "translational research" had been invented. Nor can a professional label convey the strength of his personality, his love of literature, his passionate interest in politics – all of which made him such a wonderful friend and colleague.

Leonard Strang was born in 1925 in East Kilbride, outside Glasgow, of Scottish parents – his father from a local farming family and his mother from a family long established in Donside, near Aberdeen. When he was five, the family moved to Newcastle, where Leonard was to remain more or less continuously until the age of 29.

It was in Newcastle, at the age of eight and before the advent of antibiotics, that he suffered an illness which nearly killed him and was to have a profound influence on the rest of his life. An infection of the mastoid spread to the bloodstream and subsequently destroyed both hips – leaving his legs weakened and wasted in a manner which many later mistook for the effects of polio.

Months of illness were followed by prolonged convalescence, during which he read (and was read to) a great deal. Later, he was to identify this time with the awakening of his love of literature. It also marked the beginning of his fight to re-establish his life and to succeed in spite of his disability. Although he was left able to "walk" only with the aid of shoulder crutches, such was his resolve that he was playing cricket by the age of 10, albeit with another boy as his runner (it was a great personal triumph when, 19 years later, he was able to walk down the aisle aided only by a pair of walking sticks on the occasion of his marriage).

Schooling at the Royal Grammar School, Newcastle, was followed by a medical education at Durham and Newcastle, graduating in 1949. At Newcastle Strang undertook his postgraduate training in paediatrics in the department founded by James Spence, a supreme clinician who, coincidentally, had helped to save Strang's sight when he had been so ill some 20 years earlier. During the seven years he spent in that invigorating environment he learnt to observe

the natural history of disease and to respect the instincts of the mother in relation to her child's well-being ("Ask the mother" was Spence's advice) and it was there that he developed the ability to apply basic scientific principles to the management of disease – the hallmark of his future clinical practice.

After Newcastle came a move to the Royal Postgraduate Medical School at Hammersmith and the development of a research interest in the function of the lungs – initially in normal and asthmatic children and subsequently in newborn infants. A year at Harvard as a Research Fellow sparked an interest in the control of the lung circulation in the newborn – work which he continued on return to the Hammersmith.

Although the precise focus was to change later, he was now working in the area which was to dominate his research career and was later to be his major contribution to knowledge – how the lungs of the baby, which are liquid-filled and inactive as they develop in the womb, adapt to the requirements of breathing at birth.

It was at University College Medical Hospital, then separate from University College London, that Leonard Strang carried out this programme of work which established his international reputation; appointed Reader in Paediatrics in 1963, he was in 1967 the first Professor of Paediatrics to be appointed at a London undergraduate medical school.

Great advances in understanding which result from research are rarely the work of one person but they can be the result of the inspiration of one person. And so it was with Strang, who led a research team which, over a period spanning two decades, systematically studied the mechanisms responsible for liquid movement across the internal cellular lining of the infant lung: describing how it is formed within the lung during development (acting as a template for lung growth) and later demonstrating how adrenaline, secreted by

the baby in response to the stress of being born, stimulates the absorption of liquid via specialised molecular channels to make way for air at the start of breathing.

This work opened up an entirely new area of lung research and, fittingly, he was awarded the James Spence Medal in 1990 by the British Paediatric Association (now the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health) for "outstanding contributions to the advancement of paediatric knowledge".

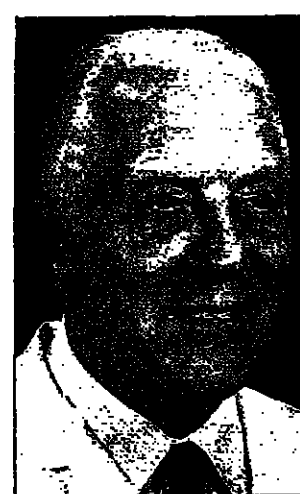
Just as important as the work itself was the role Strang played in training a series of young paediatricians – to be paediatrician-scientists in their own right. It is no accident that of those that worked with him over the years no fewer than eight have gone on to head departments of their own.

A lifetime's fascination with the physiological mechanisms of the foetal and newborn lung did not preclude a genuine commitment to the care of his patients and great skill in the delivery of that care – in this respect he was a true disciple of James Spence. Infinite patience and concern characterised Strang's relationships with parents and children alike. With friends and colleagues he could be irascible, but his outbursts were rarely irrational or random.

Strang cared deeply, particularly where injustice, ignorance or incompetence were concerned, and he was not slow to make these feelings known. This side of his character was not infrequently displayed in committee and, for those who may have used Strang as a role model, the example of how far he could go to achieve what he thought right has always provided considerable leeway.

A liberal Francophile, among whose greatest pleasures was to read Proust and Stendhal in the original, Leonard Strang moved to France when he retired in 1989 – settling happily in the village of Volx in Haute Provence with Susan, whom he had married six years earlier following the tragic death of his first wife, Madeleine.

Richard Oliver



Strang: lung research

Leonard Birnie Strang, paediatrician, physiologist, teacher; born East Kilbride, Renfrewshire 13 May 1925; Registrar and First Assistant, Department of Child Health, Durham University 1953-59; Medical Research Council Clinical Research Fellow; Royal Postgraduate Medical School, Hammersmith 1959-61; Senior Lecturer and Consultant in Paediatrics 1962-63; Research Fellow, Harvard Medical School 1961-62; Reader in Paediatrics, University College Hospital Medical School (University College London) 1963-67; Professor of Paediatrics 1967-89 (Emeritus); married 1954 Madeleine Allen (died 1981); one son, three daughters; 1983 Susan Plant; died Volx, France 24 June 1997.

Bishop Joseph Zong Huaide



Zong: Patriotic Catholicism

Days before the reunification of Hong Kong with the rest of China, Bishop Joseph Zong Huaide died in Peking of a heart attack. The bishop had worked on establishing links between the Roman Catholic Church in the former British colony and the government-sponsored Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association.

For many years Zong had headed the CPA, the Church which broke away from the jurisdiction of the Vatican in the 1950s under pressure from the Chinese Communist government. Although he had suffered at the hands of the regime during the Cultural Revolution, Zong believed that compromise with the government and

a national Catholic Church free of Vatican control were goals worth pursuing. As well as heading the CPA itself, he was also chairman of the Bishops' Conference of the CPA.

Zong was born in eastern Shandong province in 1917 into a family that could trace its Catholic roots back 200 years. After school and junior seminary in Zhoucun he entered the major seminary in the provincial capital Jinan in 1938, being ordained priest in 1943. He was then sent to work in a local village parish.

He served as vicar of the Zhoucun diocese from 1949 to 1958. These were turbulent times for the Catholic Church

in the wake of the Communist takeover. All foreign missionaries were arrested and then expelled. Bishops, priests and lay people who remained faithful to the Vatican were imprisoned as the state moved to assert control over the Catholic Church. Those prepared to break their ties with the Vatican were allowed to form the Catholic Patriotic Association, which was under tight government control.

Zong's acceptance of a national Catholic Church soon led to promotion. He was consecrated Bishop of Zhoucun in June 1988, one of the first of the new bishops ordained without Vatican approval. However, this did not spare him as times got

tougher. In the wake of the unleashing of the Cultural Revolution by fanatical Maoist students in 1966, Zong was one of the many clergy of all religions groups to be arrested. All China's churches were closed and religious books and artefacts were destroyed amid the frenzy of destruction. Zong was to spend the next decade at a reform-through-labour farm, not re-emerging until the late 1970s.

Following his release he resumed his church work at a time when life was getting easier for the government-approved religious groups, including the Patriotic Catholics. At the Third National Congress of the CPA, in May 1980, Zong was elected

chairman of the organisation, indicating the trust placed in him by the state authorities.

He later became head of the national Catholic seminary in Beijing and a member of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. From the late 1980s he was acting head of the Bishops' Conference, becoming its chairman in 1992. Zong's work – most of which was based in Peking – left him little time to care for his diocese of Jinan and Zhoucun.

Despite his high-profile position within the CPA, Zong was a timid and self-effacing figure. He was clearly not the person taking decisions in the organisation and his position as CPA

leader meant that he was not often invited abroad by other Catholic organisations.

Last month, he welcomed to Peking a delegation of Hong Kong's leading Catholics, including Coadjutor Bishop Joseph Zen Ze-kun and Auxiliary Bishop John Tong Hon. The talks were polite, but delicate, and concentrated mainly on pastoral questions. More important, talks were held with government officials. The Hong Kong Catholic Church is determined to retain its links to the Vatican and neither the Hong Kong Church nor the Chinese authorities have proposed incorporating it into the CPA. Although he did not rule

out re-integration of the Patriotic Church into the worldwide Catholic Church, Zong stressed that this was impossible unless the Vatican ruled out interference in China's domestic affairs and ended its diplomatic recognition of Taiwan, which China holds to be a rebel province. However, he did work to promote some of the reforms of the Second Vatican Council within the Patriotic Church.

Felix Corley

Joseph Zong Huaide, priest; born Shandong province, China 1917; ordained priest 1943; Bishop of Zhoucun 1958-97; Chairman, Catholic Patriotic Association 1982-97; died Peking 27 June 1997.

BIRTHS

BAYLISS/SEURIP: To Kevin and Rakie, on Saturday 25 June 1997, at King's College Hospital, London, a son, Jac (5lb 13½ oz).

DEATHS

BAKER: Rhonda, died in St Mary's Hospital, on 25 June 1997. Darling wife of Simon, daughter of Ron and Anne, and sister of Bob and Carol. She will be sadly missed by her family and her friends. Cremation at West Newwood, 11 July 1997, 3pm-4pm. No flowers, but donations please to St Christopher's Hospice, c/o and enquiries to A. Neilman & Sons, of West Newwood, 0181-670 1127.

BETTERIDGE: Richard (Dick), passed away at home on 29 June, kindly loved by all his family and friends, he will be greatly missed. Funeral service to take place at St Lawrence Church, Abingdon, on Monday 7 July at 3.15pm. Family flowers only please; donations to Oxfam. Donations and

Births, Marriages & Deaths

any further enquiries to M.K. Glider & Sons, 51 High Street, Abingdon, Oxfordshire, Tel: 01235 269994.

GAYFORD: Michael Robert Dudley, on 25 June, aged 66, adored husband of Suzanne, loving father of Nicola and Christopher, much-loved father-in-law of Tim and Alice and darling grandpa of George, Alice, Audrey, Serena, Gusset, Rupert, Kitty and Antonia. Funeral service at St Mary's, Apulham, on Tuesday 8 July at 3pm. No flowers. Donations, if wished, to Macmillan Nurses, c/o Edward White & Son, 5 South Pallant, Chichester, 01243 782136.

For GAZETTE, please telephone 0171-293 2011 or fax 0171-293 2010.

Forthcoming marriages

Dr A.M. Balfour and Miss V.J.E. Clarke. The engagement is announced between Victoria, daughter of Mr and Mrs Graham Clarke, of Lynton, Hampshire, and Alistair, elder son of Dr and Mrs David Balfour, of Lyndhurst, Hampshire.

Anniversaries

Births: Thomas Crumner, Archbishop of Canterbury, 1489; Alexander Frederick Douglas-Horne, Lord Home of the Hirsel, politician, 1903. Deaths: Ernest Miller Hemingway, novelist, committed suicide 1961; Vladimir Vladimirovich Nabokov, novelist and lepidopterist, 1977. Today is the Feast Day of St Monogundis. St Otto of Bamberg and Saints Processus and Martinian.

sevier, 61; Lord Mackay of Clashfern, former Lord Chancellor, 70; Mr Dennis Marks, general director, English National Opera, 49; Mr Ferdinand Mount, Editor, *Times Literary Supplement*, 58; Lord Owen, former MP, 59; Sir Kieran Prendergast, former High Commissioner to Kenya, 55; Lord Steff of Brimpton, honorary president, Marks and Spencer, 84; Mrs Ann Taylor MP, Leader of the House of Commons, 65; Mrs Elspeth Thomas, Chairman, British Red Cross, 60; Mr John Timpon, broadcaster, 69.

Proceedings for extradition are criminal proceedings

LAW REPORT

2 July 1997

Re Levin (application for a writ of habeas corpus): House of Lords (Lord Goff of Chieveley, Lord Nichols of Birkenhead, Lord Steyn, Lord Hoffman, Lord Hutton) 19 June 1997

Proceedings before a magistrate to decide whether there was sufficient evidence to commit a person to prison pending a decision by the Home Secretary as to his extradition were criminal proceedings.

The House of Lords dismissed the appellant's appeal against the refusal by the Divisional Court of his application for a writ of habeas corpus. The appellant was a Russian citizen who had been detained with a view to extradition to the United States. It was alleged that he had used a computer terminal in St Petersburg to gain unauthorised access to the computerised fund transfer service of Citibank NA in New Jersey, and had made fraudulent transfers of funds.

The procedure for extradition to the United States was governed by the provisions of the Extradition Act 1870 which

had been consolidated in Schedule 1 to the Extradition Act 1989. It was the duty of the metropolitan stipendiary magistrate, pursuant to paragraph 6(1) of Schedule 1, to hear the appellant's case in the same manner as if he were charged with an indictable offence committed in this country.

The magistrate found that the evidence justified the appellant's commitment for trial, and accordingly ordered his commitment to prison to await the decision of the Home Secretary as to whether he should be surrendered. The appellant's application to the Divisional Court for the issue of a writ of habeas corpus, claiming that the evidence adduced before the magistrate had not justified his commitment, was dismissed.

Alun Jones QC and James Lewis (Reynolds Dawson & Co) for the appellant; Paul Garlick QC and David Purry (CPS) for the Governor of Brixton Prison and the United States Government.

Lord Hoffman said that the evidence before the magistrate had included an affidavit of a director of Citibank which dealt with the computerised fund transfer service. The witness had produced copies of computer printouts recording unauthorised transfers of funds amounting in all to US\$10.7m.

Another employee of Citibank had given oral evidence explaining how the computer records were created. An accomplice had identified the appellant as the person who had initiated the unauthorised payment instructions from his computer terminal in St Petersburg.

It had been submitted for the appellant that the computer printouts were hearsay and inadmissible. They would be admissible in criminal proceedings under section 69 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, but R v Governor of Brixton Prison, ex parte Francis [1995] 1 WLR 1121 had de-

cided that extradition proceedings were not criminal proceedings.

That argument seemed wrong at every stage. The printouts were not hearsay. They did not assert that the transfers had taken place; they recorded the transfers themselves.

Extradition proceedings were criminal proceedings, of a special kind, but criminal proceedings none the less. In *ex parte Francis* McCowan LJ had said that section 78 of the 1984 Act had no application to extradition proceedings.

Both case law and the terms of the Extradition Act 1989 pointed to extradition proceedings being categorised as criminal: see *Armand v Home Secretary* and *Minister of Defence of Royal Netherlands Government* [1943] AC 147, and section 9(2) of paragraph 6(1) of Schedule 1 to the 1989 Act.

It had been submitted, alternatively, that extradition

proceedings were criminal proceedings, and that the magistrate should have exercised his discretion under section 78(1) of the 1984 Act to exclude the evidence of the accomplice and of the computer printouts.

McCowan LJ had gone too far in *ex parte Francis* in saying that section 78 had no application to extradition proceedings. If it applied to criminal proceedings it must also apply to extradition proceedings, although it was likely that since the commitment to the present case extradition proceedings had been excluded from the operation of section 78 by the Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act 1996.

The question was, however, whether the admission of the evidence would have such an adverse effect on the fairness of the extradition proceedings that the court ought not to admit it. No reasonable magistrate would have excluded the evidence in the present case. The appeal was dismissed.

Kate O'Hanlon, Barrister

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On sexual equality, we should agree to differ

Can you, in all honesty, imagine a society in which the relationship between men and women is equal in all significant respects? First, rephrase the question in the form that it is usually answered: can you imagine a world in which labour is evenly divided, men taking their fair share of domestic responsibilities, women having equivalent access to all kinds of formal employment?

Put like that, well, yes, of course you can. It would obviously be possible to organise society in that way if individual people, organisations, companies, families, and everything else remotely human could be persuaded to ditch a sense of social baggage. It is also perfectly possible (indeed, right) to take the view that we should reorganise our lives and reinvent our institutions in the direction of greater equality. How can anyone seriously doubt that we will be a happier society if people are more able to realise their lives fully, women enjoying the rewards of open access to a broad social life, men deepening their emotional lives by being with children, and so forth?

Thus, when a researcher reports to the British Psychological Society that working fathers do not behave like new men (rare nappy changes, not a lot of cooking, comes home late, doesn't look after the kids when they're ill) you can see all the women in the audience

groaning. "Yeah, tell me something I don't know already." But, even though that particular feminist ambition of equality is far from being achieved, it is increasingly clear that it does not represent the whole question - either for men or women. Increasingly we find ourselves concerned with a more fundamental uncertainty. Are men and women profoundly, ineluctably different? Are our circuit boards wired according to completely different plans? And if they are, is it possible that there are ways in which equality is a meaningless notion in the relationship between the sexes?

Instinctively, an awful lot of us think that our brains, our behaviours, our abilities and predispositions, are different in predetermined ways. But we don't actually know. Take the report only a week or two ago about the probability that there is a genetic predisposition in women to be more adept at communicating and co-operating, while there is a converse predisposition among men to drive for lone achievement. Reporting of this research finding attracted considerable comment, partly because (as ever) scientists were irritated that newspapers (including *The Independent*) should render their findings in terms that enabled lay folk to get a handle on the subject. So, we reported that boys will be boys and girls will be girls because that is what their chromosomes dictate. Actually, of course, the researchers were quite properly more cautious than that. But in some respects the most interesting thing is that no one really thought this was a particularly controversial or necessarily challenging thought. It conformed so precisely with widespread expectation that few people became exercised about it.

Take another example. We reported in some detail this week research into women's newspaper reading habits, and what female newspaper executives think about the material that newspapers carry. Naturally enough, because men mostly dominate news output, and because women mostly say they want to read about things other than conventional news "events", there is an assumption that news is distorted by being male-oriented. Does that necessarily follow? It might, or it might not, depending on whether women actually want news at all - or something else. The idea of laying an even ground may be beside the point.

So here we are, making vast assumptions about our fundamental nature, without really having much evidence to point to the truth. In America, in

particular, many research scientists believe that the ancient nature/nurture argument might be far more resolvable than we think. Technology now enables us to scan brains in ways that may identify a wide range of "soft-wired" differences, including intelligence, social and sexual differences. But there is a great reluctance to support such research in the open: it is largely hidden from view, for fear that it will upset our cherished presumptions.

What are we scared of? First, just suppose, purely for the sake of argument, that women do indeed have a genetic predisposition to be more co-operative in their social relations than men, and that men, conversely, are more likely to adopt aggressive postures. Why is the one propensity necessarily "better" than the other? Surely there are obvious situations in which the male propensity to go solo and compete is more useful than the female propensity to compromise, just as the reverse of this is true. Remember, second, that we are, like other species, highly adaptable. We may be able to rewire some parts of ourselves rather quickly, but hopelessly incapable of altering others.

So, if men and women are actually slightly different animals, who fulfil complementary roles, but also rub up against each other (excuse the metaphor) in different ways, isn't

that an important and useful way to understand ourselves? The more open-minded we can be about the way in which we interrelate, the better; and that may very well mean that men should no more become women than women should become men.

A sticky wicket for Mr Major

It does look suspiciously as if John Major is in denial. No, I wasn't Prime Minister, no, not at all, you see. First he wants to clear off sharply, leaving his party to flounder about miserably in an all-too-hasty search for his successor - an argument from which Mr Major conspicuously absented himself, as the candidates attempted to distance themselves from him. Now that can't have been fun, and you have to have some sympathy: such devastating defeat takes time to assimilate. But then he chooses to stay at home to attend the Denis Compton memorial rather than go to Hong Kong. Given the choice between saluting a cricketing great, and bidding farewell to Britain's remaining vestiges of Empire, Mr Major knew where his heart lay: half-way down the 22-yard green stretch. Looks almost too fitting a conclusion.



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Fans unjustly blamed for Hillsborough

Sir: I was dismayed and incensed to read Michael Roberts's letter (28 June) suggesting that the crowd were responsible for the crush at Hillsborough. This maligns a large number of innocent people.

The design of the Leppings Lane end was likely to encourage such a crush. The area was divided into three pens, with access to the central pen via the tunnel and side pens by the ends. Since access to all three was from the area behind the turnstiles with no further control, it would be impossible to control numbers in each pen even before the gates bypassing the turnstiles were opened. Because the obvious way in was through the tunnel and most people wish to stand behind the goal, most would attempt to enter the centre pen and few would enter the side pens to which entrance was less obvious.

At some other grounds this would be unlikely to happen. At Wembley when there was terracing each standing area was separately ticketed. At Anfield on the Kop there were no fences dividing the standing area into pens.

Any individual in a crowd has little control over his movement. That has led to the other crush disasters such as Ibrox and the wartime accident in the London Tube. To suggest that those who formed the crowd were responsible is absurd. I am sure that given information they would have acted responsibly, but they could not possibly have known of problems at the front: indeed they could suppose that those controlling the ground had a duty to ensure that the pens were not overfilled.

Regrettably, even in these days of all-seater grounds, it could still happen, as all clubs do not issue tickets for specific seats. Fortunately we no longer have fences, so the results are unlikely to be as serious.

I trust Mr Roberts will accept that a crowd will always act in this way (rather like water) and ceases to be a group of individuals with individual will.

RICHARD PEARSON
Cardiff

Sir: Michael Roberts states that those who "tried to cram themselves into the already overcrowded terraces" should take the blame for causing the Hillsborough tragedy irrespective of "other factors involved in the disaster".

It was precisely these "other factors" which led to supporters trying to enter the massively overcrowded middle pen of the Leppings Lane end of the ground. For instance, the decision to open an exit gate, and admit many fans, without even checking tickets, or South Yorkshire Police's ignorance of closed-circuit television evidence, which showed a potential crushing situation within the middle pen, while the two adjacent pens remained easily accessible.

If supporters had been directed by stewards or policemen towards less congested areas on their entry to the ground, 96 people might still be alive today.

A KELLY
Manchester

Sir: On a sunny spring morning in 1989, my husband set out to attend a football match. That night, someone completely different came home and our lives had been irrevocably changed.

BUDGET FORECAST



The enormity of the tragic deaths of men, women and children at Hillsborough has rightly overshadowed the multitude of other personal tragedies which arose out of that day. Thousands of people present were devastated by the trauma they experienced and witnessed. Many carry the guilt, not of having caused what happened, but of having survived. This, regardless of the fact that it had not been for the prompt and selfless action of fans both inside and outside the pens, many more would have died.

Michael Roberts (letter, 28 June) need not concern himself about the police "taking representation" from these people. West Midlands Police did that last time. The fans were exonerated by the Taylor inquiry report. The uninformed interpretations of what happened that day, begun by West Yorkshire Police and *The Sun* newspaper and perpetuated by such as Mr Roberts, continue to cause pain to those already suffering. A new inquiry and reopened inquests on those who died will finally nail the myth that football fans were culpable.

PAT AYERS
Liverpool

Sir: Your correspondent ("Straw sets out review of football tragedy", 27 June) incorrectly reports on a material fact.

She writes: "The Crown Prosecution Service has studied video footage discovered in the archives of Yorkshire Television which South Yorkshire Police previously said was of too poor quality to make available to the Taylor inquiry or to the inquest." That is wrong. The video footage in question is from police tapes

which were made available to Lord Justice Taylor and HM coroner for the inquest.

They are also being made available to Yorkshire Television subsequent to the inquiry by the South Yorkshire Police. It is also significant collateral for our assertion that there is no "cover-up" as popularly alleged in some quarters. The inquiry ordered by the Home Secretary will lay this particular confusion to rest.

RICHARD WELLS
Chief Constable
South Yorkshire Police
Sheffield

A chance missed in Hong Kong

Sir: We may well feel melancholy over the proceedings in Hong Kong. Much British goodwill has been involved.

As a member of the British Army, I arrived in Hong Kong in 1946, in time to see the Japanese war memorial blown up. Hong Kong was then something of a slag heap. The British routinely treated the Chinese as an inferior race, but that inferior race set about rebuilding their splendid island and their trade. It became the most amazing futuristic city on the globe.

The British government would not give the Hong Kongers British passports. They might have wished to come and live in our chilly island. But what a chance was missed. We should have leased

those energetic people the Isle of Wight for 99 years. In just 10 years' time, we would have had a mighty new Hong Kong off the south coast of England.

BRIAN ALDISS
Oxford

Sir: I was glad to read the letter from Drummond Hunter (30 June). The fact that Hong Kong has been handed over to China by Britain and not by some other power is due to the action of one relatively unknown man at the end of the war in the Far East.

The Rev J Ernest Sandbach, a minister of the Methodist Church, went as a missionary to Hong Kong in 1938 and, in addition to his church work, he was responsible for the Sailors' and Soldiers' Home and was officiating minister for Services personnel.

Following the invasion by the Japanese in 1941 he organised hospital supplies and then, with other civilians, was interned in the camp on the Stanley peninsula in 1942. He continued his missionary work as far as possible in the camp and was appointed chairman of the camp committee and, as such, represented the internees in negotiations with the Japanese authorities, often at great personal risk to himself.

Hearing of the imminent surrender to the Allied Forces in 1945, he marched out of the camp with the Colonial Secretary and a Chinese coast skipper and went to the Japanese officer in charge and told him he was taking over Hong Kong as a British colony. Very

soon after he was told by the Allied HQ to take over Hong Kong in the name of the four Allies. He replied, informing them that he had already taken over Hong Kong in the name of Great Britain and "so it has remained" he told me with a smile years later. He stayed in Hong Kong until 1960 and for his work there he was awarded the OBE on his return to England. I had known his name for years before I met him in 1974 when I came to Selby and found he had retired here. We became very good friends and he gave me willing help in my work until I retired in 1987. Later I had the privilege of giving thanks to God for his life and work at his funeral in May 1991.

The Rev F R DOWSON
Selby, Chichester

The best ways to treat pain

Sir: Suzanne Moore ("Whose death is it anyway?", 27 June) has done little to help those of us who are struggling to educate the medical profession in the management of pain, never mind the general public.

I can appreciate the agonies undergone by your correspondent having acute low back pain and the lack of skills by the accident and emergency team in the management of her problem. However, she fails to understand the distinction between acute, chronic and malignant pain. Acute

low back pain is recognised as being a national priority in terms of management, because of the rising number of cases reported and unfortunately for Ms Moore hospital admission for analgesia is not recommended. The recent report of a multi-disciplinary Clinical Standards and Advisory Group recommends that people should remain mobile and return to work quickly, so that their condition does not become chronic.

It would appear that your correspondent feels that opiate analgesia should be administered at the drop of a hat even if it is not thought to be effective in managing some types of pain (including cancer pain). There is a distinct place for the use of opiate analgesics, however it should be recognised that there are different types of pain and some pain responds better to non-conventional analgesics than to opiates.

Some pain will never disappear, despite any drugs, operations or nerve blocks. This pain is real and still requires help, but the patient must learn to manage their pain rather than seeking the magic cure. This may require psychological rather than medical intervention.

I accept that pain is a very real problem and is probably the commonest cause for a patient to consult a doctor. However, the real problem is recognising the type of pain and prescribing the correct treatment - this often does not include opiate analgesics.

Dr KEITH A MILLIGAN
Clinical Director, Pain Management Directorate
South Tees Acute NHS Trust
Middlesbrough

Late nights at the library

Sir: The decline in the use of public libraries is not just due to them purchasing too few books ("Use of libraries declines as cuts limit new books", 30 June). Library hours in our own London borough, Camden, have been severely cut over the years. Even worse, opening times are out of touch with current working hours and the spread of commuting: my own branch, the borough's flagship, normally closes at six, with one "late night" opening - to 7pm. Having "grown up" in my local library, I particularly regret that my schoolboy son cannot go there after tea, as I used to, given how long it now takes even children to get home. On Saturdays, meanwhile, the desperate scramble of teenagers with project work besieging an under-staffed inquiry desk can put off library users of other ages.

Better funding alone might not help here. Many councils are keener on buying computer gadgetry for their libraries than on improving access for working residents. This is not to say they are unaware of the problem: when I phoned Camden's deputy director a few weeks ago, she confirmed that a survey of library users had shown great demand for longer opening hours. Reassured, I asked how the council would respond to these findings.

The answer was that Camden would conduct another survey on the subject at some point in the future. Internet facilities, on the other hand, are to be introduced very soon. ...

E FALLIS
London NW6

Free for a day

Sir: Eleanor Boyle (Letters, 30 June) will be pleased to know that we at Dulwich Picture Gallery operate exactly the Continental free day system, which she advocates. Normally the Gallery costs £3 or £1.50 concession, with free admission for children and the unemployed; on Friday it is free (for all). England's oldest public art gallery receives no revenue funding from the state.

We cannot live without admission charges; on the other hand we cannot countenance excluding any part of the public for whom our founders bequeathed their magnificent collection back in 1811. DESMOND SHAW-TAYLOR
Director, Dulwich Picture Gallery
London SE21

Uncouth in Paris

Sir: John Lichfield is astonished that he has not been invited into a French home yet (Paris Days, 28 June). How many French people has he invited into his home? This is not meant to be a flip remark; in France, that's the way round it is. It is the newcomer who has to make the first move.

It's no good standing around waiting to be recognised; people will just think you're uncouth.

KEITH EDGERLEY
Aigues-Mortes, France

Ecstatic roulette

Sir: George Howarth (letter, 28 June) asserts that "Drugs destroy lives... taking an Ecstasy tablet is like playing Russian roulette". Is Russian roulette actually illegal? VAL URTONE
Northill, Bedfordshire

150 من الدين

Future generations will be the best judge of the Budget

This evening we will all be making those little personal calculations about the Budget – how much more we will be paying for petrol or booze, whether we gain or lose from the income tax changes. Tomorrow the papers will be full of macro-economic calculations – what are the implications for interest rates and economic growth, for government borrowing, or for future public spending. But before all that hits us, let's just think about some other tests that might be applied, tests of things vastly more important than the price of a bottle of whisky or the future profile of the PSBR.

Try these three: the implications of the Budget for Britain's role in the world economy; for the environment; and for fairness between different generations. For government financial policies should not be framed just to try to satisfy existing voters. There is a wider constituency which does not vote in British elections, but which has a profound interest in what our government does: the countries with whom we trade and have investment links; the creatures and plants on our island and beyond; and our children, our children's children and the generations of the unborn.

The importance of the first of these, in particular the people in countries that have investments here and in which we ourselves have investments, is recognised by Gordon Brown. He would argue that in a global economy the job of government is to think globally, rather than nationally, when framing a budget. We live in a world of gigantic capital flows, in which money and the knowledge that money will flow anywhere in the globe. His view is that these international investors want most of all stability, so the first job of government is to provide that.

Getting relations right with the international investment community is particularly important for the UK. Most people know that we have been very successful at attracting foreign investment: Nissan, Toyota and so on. It is much less widely appreciated that the stock of investments we own abroad is even larger than the foreign-owned stock here. As a result we have a large net income from investments – the second largest in fact, after Japan, in the world. We seem to have a comparative advantage in the craft of managing international investments.

So the test for the Chancellor today is not just the narrow one of whether his measures are approved by the world's financial markets or the multinational corporations. It is the broader test of whether they are in tune with a world in which capital and people can move much more freely than ever before in human history. The simple question is whether we continue to attract foreign capital, and any fall-off in the inflow would certainly be cause for concern. The more subtle one is whether the Budget recognises that globalisation takes many forms, including attracting foreign nationals to base themselves in Britain. One particular concern is whether our tax laws, currently favourable towards resident non-nationals, may be skewed too far against them.

Now the implications of the Budget towards the environment. Tax and spending changes have, over a generation or so, an enormous impact on the environment. The transformation of the British countryside, from the wheat fields of East Anglia to the Sitka spruce plantations of Scotland, have been driven by tax breaks.



Hamish McRae

There is a wider constituency which does not vote: our trading partners, our flora and fauna, and our children's children

Government-inspired changes in turn affect wildlife: not just the creatures who live here, but the birds that visit our shores and the fish that swim in our seas. Some recent changes (for example, the switch from coal to gas in generating power) have great environmental advantages. Britain looks like being one of a tiny handful of countries that will be producing less carbon dioxide emissions in the year 2000 than they were in 1990. Virtually all the "environmentally correct" countries have worse records on this most vital issue.

But there is much more we can and should do, and this means some tough choices. Voters and pressure groups concern themselves with a few high-profile issues and can be satisfied relatively easily. But there are fewer votes in measures that will hurt people now but limit climate change in 30 years' time. Taxing company cars and parking places or switching some money into, say, better bicycle ways or public transport has much less impact than pricing all energy properly. The Chancellor sets off on the wrong foot here with the cut in VAT on home fuel. The key test is whether the Budget's impact on the environment is tokenism, or whether it is prepared to upset people now in order to improve environmental conditions far into the future.

This leads to the third test: will public finance take into account the interests not just of present voters, but of future ones? Left to themselves, human beings can be astonishingly far-sighted. Our public parks were planned and paid for by people who would never live to see them in their full glory. One of the most powerful human drives seems to be the desire of parents not just to bring up and support children through their education, but also to leave something to them when they die.

Public finance, alas, does not work like that, for governments all over the world have built up enormous debts that will have to be redeemed in higher taxation by children and the unborn. In Continental Europe the problem is particularly grave because of the unfunded pension liabilities, which will have to be paid by a smaller group of workers; but even in the UK we should be paying back national debt now, while we can afford to do so, as well as encouraging people to save more.

So there is a third test: are we running our finances in a way that is fair to future citizens? There is a string of specific questions here. For example, we need to test government financial policy on education: are we investing enough in our children, and demanding high enough standards from them? Does tax policy help cement the family unit? Does it help people save? Are the big taxation and spending policies resulting in unsustainable national debts?

None of this is easy; none of this is immediate. It is difficult to become overly worried about the interests of a Japanese multinational, a migrant bird, or a child who will not be born for another five years. And so I am afraid that you will not see these big questions tackled in much depth tomorrow in that fog of war which will follow what is certainly a very important political event. But if the financial policies of this government are to matter at all a generation from now, they will matter because of their sensitivity to big issues such as globalisation, the environment and intergenerational fairness – and not because of what they do to the price of a bottle of booze.

The televised debate that never was

A leadership debate has long been the holy grail of British broadcasters. Even in the context of a modern campaign covered by hour after hour of election programming on TV and radio, this would have been the big one – the programme all the broadcasters were convinced would be special enough to attract the parts of the electorate other political programmes couldn't reach and to deliver a mass audience. It could have been the television event of the year and possibly the defining point of the campaign.

We considered that mounting such a debate lay at the heart of the BBC's public service remit and that licence-payers would legitimately expect such a crucial national event to be broadcast by us on both television and radio. It was a strong card. But not strong enough. Some of the comment following the collapse of the talks assumed that the decision was in the broadcasters' hands. It wasn't. In this game the politicians held all the aces. This was the one programme which by definition could not get on screen unless all the parties agreed not only to take part, but to take part on the same terms.



Despite all the wrangling, ultimately the parties lacked enthusiasm. It is in the public interest for the politicians and broadcasters to get it right next time, argue Tony Hall and Anne Sloman

The BBC first wrote to John Major, Tony Blair and Paddy Ashdown just before Christmas, and we started talking informally to their representatives in January. From the start the then government wanted a prime ministerial debate – a head-to-head with Tony Blair. For us this was never a starter. We had to be perceived by the audience to be fair. And that meant including the third UK party in a meaningful way and making appropriate arrangements for the SNP and Plaid Cymru. We had strong legal advice that the Liberal Democrats would challenge such a proposal in court and win. But for the BBC, being fair meant more than just avoiding legal challenge in the courts.

Initial contacts were not promising. The Conservative Party told us that they would not be talking to the broadcasters until a decision had been made in principle by the then prime minister. John Major was not interested in a format that included Paddy Ashdown. Labour was happy to engage in discussions, but wasn't optimistic about it taking off. If it happened at all, Labour wanted a negotiated framework well in advance. The Liberal Democrats made it clear that they had every intention of carrying out their threat of a legal challenge to any debate which excluded them.

In March, voices in the Conservative camp in favour of the debate became more audible, and the weekend before the election was declared we set to work on the first of many formats to put to the parties. Sunday 16 March marked the

beginning of an intense, exhilarating but ultimately frustrating two weeks of negotiation. We learnt all the routes to avoid the worst traffic jams between Conservative Central Office, where Michael Dobbs was handling the talks for John Major, King's Bench Walk, where Lord Irvine, who negotiated for Labour, had his chambers, and the Westminster base of Lord Holme, the Liberal Democrats' campaign manager. By the evening of Wednesday 26 April we had come very close to an agreement, but on the following day it collapsed.

What went wrong? All along the parties had had a very different view about what a debate or debates should consist of. They did make concessions to each other. The Conservatives, not wanting to submit Mr Major to an undignified bear-garden, had initially been very wary of any audience participation at all. Labour, judging that Tony Blair would perform at his best with an audience, wanted most of the debate to involve, not just be in front of, an audience. The parties disagreed about the length and about whether there should be one debate or two. Our negotiations narrowed the gap considerably on all these points. But the central stumbling block – the role of Paddy Ashdown – remained, and as Labour would not be party to anything which might be subject to a legal

challenge, the Liberal Democrats held the key. Lord Holme was determined to ensure that Paddy Ashdown was not "confined to a corner" of the programme. Michael Dobbs was equally determined that John Major should have the maximum opportunity to take on Tony Blair head to head, with as little three-party interaction as possible. As minutes here and there in the format were traded, Labour lost patience and said it wanted it sorted out one way or the other before the Easter break, and set a deadline of 5pm on Thursday 27th. Michael Dobbs decided that meant, in effect, that the negotiations were over and having been at the centre of the action for the previous two weeks, we stood by helplessly watching the Press Association reports come up on the screen as the parties started to brief the press with their own versions as to why.

Could the debate talks have had a successful outcome? If the parties had met round a table months, even years in advance, as they do in the US, would an agreed format have emerged? If the broadcasters had acted together, instead of in competition with each other, would that have made a difference? These are questions we have been asked many times since the election and, indeed, have asked ourselves. But they presuppose that the politicians really wanted a debate, and shared the broadcasters' enthusiasm to make it the centrepiece of the election campaign. But there is little evidence that they did.

Elections are the point in the political cycle when politicians are least likely to be high-minded about engaging in debate for debate's sake, or making (sensible) negotiated concessions to their opponents. Politicians fight elections to win. If they're in government, why offer opportunities to the challenger? After all, many incumbent MPs see no advantage in taking part in broadcast constituency debates to which, under the provisions of the Representation of the People Act, all candidates must be invited to participate.

In the UK, party managers see only a high-risk strategy when they think of public, televised debates between leaders. To them, such an event, or events, over which they have limited control and which will dominate press and broadcast coverage for days before and after, is more threat than opportunity.

But elsewhere, in the US for example, leadership debates are widely seen as playing a significant part in helping voters to make their choices. Politicians, broadcasters and audiences have embraced them in a variety of formats and locations. Similarly, we believed – and still do – that such debates are very much in the public interest. In 1997 the parties didn't agree. None of them wanted it enough to make it happen. And so it didn't. But we urge them to reconsider now, while there is time for calm reflection and negotiation and when the balance of party advantage may be less obvious.

If we can find a way through, we believe the public will be better informed and our political system strengthened. We invite the parties to find a way forward with us – we owe it to our audience – but there must be a genuine conviction on all sides.

Tony Hall is chief executive, BBC News. Anne Sloman is chief political adviser to the BBC.

Under the Dome: a serious proposal

So, on a oval slab of polluted mud, surrounded by the viscous, colourless smear of post-industrial East London, a Dome shall arise. We are not talking Xanadu here: the grey and turbid Thames runs by it, not the sacred Alpha. But, though Tony Blair is no Kubla Khan, there is vision here, and boldness.

The Dome is surrounded by circles of doubters, from Labour MPs to companies. The appointment of Peter Mandelson, who has the power, energy and motive to make it a success, has been greeted with behind-hand snickering from other ministers. But if Blair had faked this, the whole millennium project would have ground to a halt; and a rare opportunity to do something optimistic and unexpected would have been squandered.

Yet the biggest question remains unanswered. We know about the site of this Dome, the architecture, the planning, the politics. We know something, at least, about the funding. The impresario, Sir Cameron Macintosh, has been chosen. The directors are in place. The middle class are quite prepared. The only thing is... what is to go inside? What is this Great Something to be about?

Previous grand events have had clear enough themes. The Festival of Britain, led by Mr Mandelson's grandfather Herbert Morrison, was a

moment of rebirth after the devastation and grimness of war. The Great Exhibition of 1851 was a triumphal celebration of mankind's ingenuity as the Industrial Revolution roared at full power. Yet in some ways the millennium is more resonant than either.

One can imagine, all too easily, how we could blow it. A "heritage" show would blow it. The Dome should hold what the Dome should hold: a mosaic of different peoples, the world's biggest crossing point for airlines, telephony and the world's largest centre for cross-border shares. The whole point of Greenwich is that it is a world time-centre. The second answer, obviously, is that this must be more forward-looking than backward-looking.

But the third and most important answer is: seriousness. The first emphasis, even in our short attention-span,

leisure culture, should not be patronising "fun" or entertainment-pace. People can go to lots of places for that.

If this is to be different it has to draw us to Greenwich because the Dome poses and tries to answer big questions about humanity – our future, our current behaviour, our wars, our consumption, our relationship with the rest of the biosphere. It needs to have a hard core of serious intent, however it is presented.

It needs to be a stock-taking and thought-provoking place where we can look at ourselves in a mirror and then argue about how we will survive fairly and sustainably through the next century. As a species, we have exploded in numbers, power, technology and danger in a tiny space of time. The Dome can be and must be a place which sparks debate on the future of housing, of national identity, of democracy and the Internet; the exploitation of space; the politics of food; the economics of biotechnology; the diplomacy of water.

And yes, inescapably, that means much of the exhibition

would centre on the environment. Far from turning people off, that would attract them: the time is right. We are citizens, not simply consumers. Climate change – "whether" for some people, "how much, and when" for most of us – is the biggest news story of our time. From the English wondering what it means for the river-diverting farmers of Essex and Kent (and their chalk streams with the fat trout, now gurgling down thirsty boreholes) to the flooded North-Italian and the desiccated Africans.

We worry about the hillside-carving strip mines and water-meadow-destroying bypasses. Lots of us worry about the disappearing skylarks and song thrushes, the harbour porpoises and stone curlews, the assorted threatened birds, bats and bitterns.

All of us breathe. Most of us drive. And as the brown haze curls over the great cities, and almost every family shops by car, sitting in slowly moving metal convoys, we all know we cannot go on like this. We all know that another generation of growing car use like the last

two generations will seize up the last freely moving roads and make the cities unbearable.

We know that our farming has been too intensive, both for human health and the balance of the countryside. We know that an ocean economy which offers supermarket shoppers flash-frozen exotic fish, air-freighted by jumbo from the Indian Ocean, but which has little left to offer from the destroyed breeding-grounds around our coastline, is a short-term fishing economy.

We know all this. So let us, as one millennium ends and another begins, talk about it. There are plenty of energetic technological responses, as well as political ones, to be exhibited. An environmental campaigner, Peter Stone, has suggested using a ground-breaking, if provocative, report to the Club of Rome, *Factor Four: Doubling Wealth, Halving Resource Use*, by Amory Lovins, as a text for Greenwich.

The book discusses the new forms of energy efficiency, building, transport and trading that are likely to be necessary in the century ahead. Such seriousness may send a shiver down the spines of some politicians and business executives. But great events need great purposes. And this may be the modern equivalent of the industrial enthusiasm of 1851 or the consumer enthusiasm of the Festival a century later.

Certainly, it is far likelier to attract big outside agencies and companies, from the more far-sighted of companies to the World Bank. It would make Greenwich a real global centre – impossible to ignore, difficult to deride. In a letter to Mr Mandelson, Mr Stone argues: "Is it not more relevant to the next millennium than just a good old national knees-up... Let Britain, which has done so much to create the modern world, take the golden opportunity of the first high noon of the new millennium to invite the world to take stock..."

I couldn't agree more. There is real vision, a generous-minded intellectual response to the decision to go ahead with the Dome as a structure. Yes, there should be fun and entertainment too. Yes, it needs to be slick and professional. But this thing will work if it catches the imagination of millions. The only way to do that is to treat them seriously.

If it does that – and the early signals in Whitehall are that Mr Mandelson and his team see the challenge very clearly – then the Dome will be a great success. But if it is designed purely as a pleasure dome, or a trade fair, it will be a turkey, and all the dry ice, amplification systems and laser shows in the world won't save it. Fun is fun; but life is more interesting still.

The readers



The writers

Michael Ignatieff, Robert Skidelsky, Matt Ridley, Mario Vargas Llosa, George Steiner, Ian Buruma, David Siskice, Margaret Atwood, Samuel Huntington, Ernst Gombrich, Anne Applebaum

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Amersham merger creates world leader

Sameena Ahmad

Amersham International is merging with Nycomed of Norway to create the world's leading supplier of diagnostic imaging agents, which have a diverse range of medical uses from X-rays to scanners. The deal comes just three weeks after Amersham, the first company to be privatised by Margaret Thatcher in 1982, announced the merger of its life sciences division with that of Swiss drug group, Pharmacia & Upjohn.

The new company, Nycomed Amersham, which at yesterday's share prices is valued at over £2bn, will have combined sales of £244m, of which £90m is accounted for by Amersham. The all-paper deal takes the form of an offer for Nycomed by higher rated Amersham - which will leave Amersham shareholders with 47 per cent of the combined group.

Though shares in both Amersham and Nycomed gained strongly in early trading, concerns that annual cost savings will be eroded by fierce competition in Nycomed's core US X-ray imaging market and uncertainty over renewal of two key contracts tempered Amersham's initial 25.5p hike. Amersham's shares closed 87.5p higher at £16.82p while Nycomed's shares climbed 23 per cent to 132.5 kronas.

Bill Castell, Amersham's chief executive who becomes chief executive of the new group, said Nycomed added potentially exciting areas of MRI and Ultrasound imaging to its own world-leading position in the radioactive sector.

"We now have the clout to offer radiological departments an entire range of products," he added. Trond Jacobsen, a director of Nycomed, estimated that the market for Ultrasound imaging agents could be worth £1bn by 2001. "There is a wonderful base of equipment which can use our agents. Most doctors already have ultrasound machines."

The new group will have 30 per cent of the £3bn world imaging market, leading Bracco (half-owned by Germany's Merck) with 21 per cent, the US's Mallinckrodt with 15 per cent and Germany's Schering with 14 per cent.

Huntingdon shares dive on fewer orders

The share price of Huntingdon Life Sciences, the controversial group which tests drugs on animals, dived by 15 per cent to 55.5p after the company warned that disappointing new orders would leave profits for the year to December "substantially below" last year's £9.4m, writes Sameena Ahmad.

Christopher Cliffe, chief executive, said that recent allegations from animal rights groups which had led to criminal proceedings against several employees and a Home Office investigation into the group's working practices had proved seriously disruptive. "Considerable management effort has been devoted to keeping clients informed and to retaining clients' confidence," he said. Glaxo Wellcome and Zeneca

Mr Castell said that Nycomed's investments in Shanghai and Latin America positioned the enlarged company in new and fast growing markets. Merging administration, sales and marketing and the loss of around 300 jobs, including around 100 from the UK, from a combined workforce of 11,600 offered scope to save at least £40m a year to 2000, with half realised by December next year. Amersham, which is changing its year end from March to December, will make a £50m exceptional provision in its next nine month figures and is also paying a special dividend to Nycomed shareholders.

Analysts agreed that the deal made strategic sense and would be earnings enhancing, though numbers were complicated by the change in year end, £80m cost savings from restructuring at Nycomed following last year's profits warning and the inclusion of the Pharmacia business. Nigel Barnes, pharmaceutical analyst at Merrill Lynch, said: "This makes an enormous amount of sense given both companies are in the imaging markets. There are synergies too though not great overlap since the new group will be in four different imaging markets."

James Dodwell at BZW expects the merger to add around 85p to earnings and is looking for 105p earnings and pre-tax profits of £240m for the year to December 1998.

However, several analysts said privately that competition in Nycomed's mature X-ray imaging business - over 80 per cent of its £154m profits last year - could erode cost savings. Following its blocked merger with generic drug group Ivax last year, Nycomed lost share to rivals who were discounting prices by up to 60 per cent. Though Mr Jacobsen said that the discounting is levelling off, the key test will be whether, or on what terms, two of Nycomed's US contracts worth 15 per cent of Nycomed's sales are renewed.

There were also concerns that following the merger some 88 per cent of the group's profits will be earned overseas. The group, which is considering paying foreign income dividends, said that if sterling continued at current levels, pre-forma profits would be cut by £30m.

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Anglo-Norwegian alliance: Amersham chief executive Bill Castell (right) with Trond Jacobsen, chief executive of Nycomed
Photograph: Peter Macdiarmid

Airtours chief to set up new base in US

Andrew Yates

David Crossland, chairman and founder of the UK's second-largest tour operator, Airtours, is moving to America to oversee the company's international expansion programme. The move is bound to fuel speculation that Mr Crossland is seeking to strengthen ties with Carnival, the US cruise company which owns a near 30 per cent stake in Airtours and is widely expected to mount a full bid for the group.

Mr Crossland's decision to move from the UK marks an important change in Airtours' strategy, heralding a push to expand its international operations.

"Mr Crossland is going overseas to develop Airtours' business over there. He will travel extensively from his base in America. It shows that Airtours is not perceived as just a UK tour operator anymore. It is an international business," said an Airtours spokesman.

Mr Crossland will live in America for at least two years, but he may stay indefinitely. He will be based in California.

Among Mr Crossland's first tasks will be to reverse the decline in the company's North American business, which lost £1.2m in the six months to March compared to a profit of £2.9m the year before. Overcapacity has dogged its Canadian business, leading all depressed prices and mounting losses and adding to speculation that Airtours may be forced to exit that market.

Airtours also incurred start-up losses at its California tour business. But Mr Crossland is understood to be keen to rapidly expand the US business, building up its cruise business and entering the time share sector.

Mr Crossland will also look for acquisitions. Last month Airtours paid \$20m (£12m) for Californian tour operator Sunstrips. More US purchases look set to follow. Mr Crossland is also likely to target South America and the Far East.

Last month Lars Thuesen, former deputy chief executive of Airtours' Scandinavian business, became the new head of the group's UK tour and retail business which has paved the way for Mr Crossland's move to the US. Airtours has no plans to close its Lancashire headquarters and move lock, stock and barrel across the Atlantic.

Smith warns ITV's regional differences must stay

Cathy Newman

Chris Smith, Secretary of State for National Heritage, warned yesterday that the regional identity of the ITV companies must not be lost amid the rapid consolidation taking place in the industry.

He also dismissed as unlikely the recent predictions by Gerry Robinson, chairman of Granada Group, which is buying Yorkshire-Tyne Tees Television, that all the ITV stations would merge within a decade.

Speaking at an Institute of

Economic Affairs Conference on the future of UK broadcasting, Mr Smith said four big owners - Carlton Communications, Granada, United News & Media and Scottish Media Group - would emerge. He added: "In the course of the next few months, we will see the establishment of three major blocks of ITV channels in England and Wales and one in Scotland."

He said he was "relaxed" about the rapid consolidation of ITV into the hands of four main players, but warned that

the regional character and programming of each ITV franchise must not be sacrificed in the rush to rationalise.

"It's extremely important that as the regions of ITV come together we do ensure that the regional character of the stations and the programme making is maintained. We do not want to see the regional definition disappearing as more and more gets concentrated in the hands of fewer and fewer," he added.

His comments came at a time of frenetic takeover activity in the industry. Within the space

of a month, Scottish has bought Grampian Television; Granada has tabled an agreed bid for Yorkshire-Tyne Tees; and United has made a recommended offer for ITV Group.

The 15 ITV franchises were awarded to 14 separate holding companies in 1993. If, as seems likely, the two most recent offers go through, only three small independent companies will remain - Border Television, Ulster Television, and Channel Islands Television.

The Heritage Secretary also yesterday alluded to plans for

the creation of Ofcom, a regulatory body to cover the converging media and telecommunications industry. Mr Smith said laying new regulatory framework would take at least two years and would follow widespread consultation.

Referring to public disagreements between the Independent Television Commission and Ofcom on BSkyB's involvement in British Digital Broadcasting, he said he had observed a slight nuance of difference between the two watchdogs. He warned that

Ofcom and the ITC must co-operate on the regulation of digital television until a new framework could be established.

"We will make sure the current regulators work properly together in accordance with their remit," he said.

He said his department was working in conjunction with the Department of Trade and Industry to consider how Ofcom should be developed.

Mr Smith also indicated yesterday that Channel 4's remit should be redefined to ensure

the broadcaster's distinctiveness, its provision for minority interests and its "ability to be less mainstream".

Under the terms of the 1990 Broadcasting Act, Channel 4 is obliged to screen a suitable proportion of programming not generally catered for by Channel 3. This definition is likely to be honed in a new broadcasting bill.

However, Mr Smith has already indicated that there will be no new media legislation in this session of Parliament, which runs until October 1998.

NatWest shares hit record high on rumours of strike

Nigel Cope
City Correspondent

Shares in National Westminster Bank soared to a record high yesterday as renewed takeover speculation surrounded the group. NatWest shares closed 42.5p higher at 849.5p with some City dealers talking of an "imminent strike".

Barclays, Commerzbank of Germany and the Royal Bank of Scotland were all mentioned as possible bidders though most analysts dismissed takeover talk as little more than rumour.

"No one is selling, so any rumour is making the stock fly," said one analyst.

NatWest declined to comment on the speculation, as did Barclays and Commerzbank. One analyst said Commerzbank was too small to make a tilt at NatWest as it was only half its size. Royal Bank of Scotland would be in an even weaker po-

sition as it is around a third the size of NatWest.

Some analysts said Prudential could be interested in NatWest as it remained keen to expand in banking while NatWest was interested in expanding in life assurance. However, any of the big four UK clearing banks would face regulatory problems as a takeover would give a merged clearer such a big share in retail banking. NatWest would be valued as a "going concern", meaning a bidder would have to take a goodwill write-off of up to £7bn. Analysts said this would be too much even for a giant like HSBC.

Shares in other banks such as Lloyds TSB, Bank of Scotland and Royal Bank of Scotland all rose strongly yesterday.

Analysts were also dismissive about a possible link-up between NatWest Markets and BZW, the investment banking arms of NatWest and Barclays

respectively. They said management would struggle to integrate the two without damaging profitability and losing key staff. "It would take unbelievable management skills to pull it off," one analyst said.

The share surge follows a decision on Monday by the Takeover Panel to turn down a request by NatWest to force Barclays to make a statement about any bid plans. Alistair Defries, the panel's director-general, said he saw no reason to intervene.

NatWest approached Abbey National about a possible link-up earlier this year and there has been speculation since about a link with another financial institution. NatWest was plunged into a financial crisis last month when it issued a profits warning and the head of its investment banking arm resigned. This followed the discovery of a mispricing of interest rate options which cost the bank £77m.

EMI secures copyright to Motown classics for £132m

Cathy Newman

EMI Group, one of the world's largest music publishers, has secured the copyright to 15,000 classic Motown hits such as *My Girl* and *I Heard It Through the Grapevine* in a £132m (£80m) deal.

The company has taken a 50 per cent stake in the Jobete companies - Jobete Music Co and Stone Music Corporation - owned by the founder of Motown Records, Berry Gordy. Sir Colin Southgate, EMI's chairman, said yesterday it was likely EMI would buy the remainder of the Jobete companies in the future.

He added that EMI had, through protracted negotiations, gained control of "the greatest private catalogue". Sir Colin said EMI had "been to the altar three times with Berry, but this is the first time we've got married".

The Jobete catalogue includes Motown classics sung by artists such as Stevie Wonder, Diana Ross, the Jackson Five, Lionel Richie and Smokey Robinson. Through the deal, which was funded entirely in cash, EMI has bought the copyright to songs such as *Baby Love*, *Ain't No Mountain High Enough* and *Reach Out I'll Be There*.

Sir Colin said he was confident EMI's full ownership of Mr Gordy's catalogue would not be "decades away". It is thought EMI would take control of the Jobete companies on Mr Gordy's retirement, if not before. Mr Gordy, who will remain chairman of the business, is 67.

Day-to-day operation of the catalogue will be handled by Martin Handier, chief executive of EMI Music Publishing.

EMI already had a marketing agreement with Mr Gordy outside North America, which will be extended throughout the

world as a result of yesterday's acquisition.

City analysts were impressed with the deal. One said the price paid was "not unreasonable" and added: "Consolidation in music publishing is a good idea. Music publishing is a very profitable business." Another said EMI would "do very well" by including the songs in compilations. EMI Music Publishing already owns the copyright to more than 1 million songs, including those by Jamiroquai, M People, and the Prodigy.

Unaudited accounts show that, at 31 December 1995, the Jobete companies had net assets of \$45.2m and reported pre-tax profits of \$6.7m. The two companies are owned by Mr Gordy and his sister Esther Edwards and was the largest remaining independently owned catalogue. Jobete Music was founded in 1959, and became the music publishing arm of Motown Records.

Super-SIB will face problems, warns Imro

Nic Cicuttii
Personal Finance Editor

Phillip Thorpe, chief executive of Imro, the fund managers' watchdog, warned yesterday that Labour proposals for a powerful single regulatory body, dubbed "super-SIB" by the City, risked creating a "massive bureaucracy".

Mr Thorpe said the enlarged Securities and Investments Board (SIB), headed by Howard Davies, which would swallow up his own organisation, offered the prospect of a simpler, more integrated form of regulation.

"There are some gains to be made from such a move, the elimination of gaps and overlaps, the levelling of uneven playing fields, the more efficient use of resources and so on," Mr Thorpe said. "There are also some predictable concerns to be recognised: particularly that this could create a massive regulatory bureaucracy, unable to respond to the rapid change of the markets, or given to seeking common solutions where previously bespoke arrangements best accommodated investor and business needs."

Imro is part of a project team set up by the SIB and which includes the Bank of England working on plans that will be submitted to Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, by the end of July. Mr Brown announced plans to pass supervisory of the banking community from the Bank of England to the SIB within days of Labour winning the General Election.

The second phase will see other self-regulatory organisa-

tions, such as Imro, the Securities and Futures Authority (SFA) and the Personal Investment Authority (PIA), folded into the SIB within the next three years.

Mr Thorpe stressed that he believed Mr Brown would be "on guard" to avoid the potential pitfalls in his proposals.

He said: "The regulator must be, and must be seen as, independent in its operation and must have the knowledge, involvement and support of the industry it seeks to regulate. It must also be open and accountable if it is to secure the confidence of investors and those who it regulates."

The Imro chief executive's comments were made as the regulator published the annual report on its activities. The regulator said it had 44 investigations in hand at the end of March 1997 while 43 disciplinary actions had been taken during the year, up 26 per cent from last year.

In the 12 months to April 1997, Imro levied more than £3.5m in fines and investigation costs from its members, up from £335,000 the previous year. That total did not include the £2m, plus £1m in costs, levied in April on Morgan Grenfell, the fund management group owned by Deutsche Bank, over the irregular trading activities of its rogue fund manager, Peter Young.

Imro said yesterday it had been successful in ensuring that nearly all pensions mis-selling cases in which its members were involved had been reviewed.

STOCK MARKETS									
FTSE 100		Dow Jones		Nikkei		Hang Seng		ASX 200	
4788.30	+123.70	7890.00	+2.7	15850.00	+100.00	10000.00	+50.00	3000.00	+10.00
4788.30	+123.70	7890.00	+2.7	15850.00	+100.00	10000.00	+50.00	3000.00	+10.00
4788.30	+123.70	7890.00	+2.7	15850.00	+100.00	10000.00	+50.00	3000.00	+10.00
4788.30	+123.70	7890.00	+2.7	15850.00	+100.00	10000.00	+50.00	3000.00	+10.00
4788.30	+123.70	7890.00	+2.7	15850.00	+100.00	10000.00	+50.00	3000.00	+10.00
4788.30	+123.70	7890.00	+2.7	15850.00	+100.00	10000.00	+50.00	3000.00	+10.00
4788.30	+123.70	7890.00	+2.7	15850.00	+100.00	10000.00	+50.00	3000.00	+10.00
4788.30	+123.70	7890.00	+2.7	15850.00	+100.00	10000.00	+50.00	3000.00	+10.00
4788.30	+123.70	7890.00	+2.7	15850.00	+100.00	10000.00	+50.00	3000.00	+10.00
4788.30	+123.70	7890.00	+2.7	15850.00	+100.00	10000.00	+50.00	3000.00	+10.00

INTEREST RATES									
Short sterling		UK medium gilt		US long bond		Eurodollar		Eurodollar	
5.75	5.75	6.00	6.00	6.50	6.50	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75
5.75	5.75	6.00	6.00	6.50	6.50	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75
5.75	5.75	6.00	6.00	6.50	6.50	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75
5.75	5.75	6.00	6.00	6.50	6.50	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75
5.75	5.75	6.00	6.00	6.50	6.50	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75
5.75	5.75	6.00	6.00	6.50	6.50	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75
5.75	5.75	6.00	6.00	6.50	6.50	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75
5.75	5.75	6.00	6.00	6.50	6.50	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75
5.75	5.75	6.00	6.00	6.50	6.50	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75

CURRENCIES									
£/\$		£/DM		£/¥		£/A\$		£/NZ\$	
1.6582	-0.012	1.5538	-0.015	0.6438	-0.001	0.6031	-0.001	0.6438	-0.001
1.6582	-0.012	1.5538	-0.015	0.6438	-0.001	0.6031	-0.001	0.6438	-0.001
1.6582	-0.012	1.5538	-0.015	0.6438	-0.001	0.6031	-0.001	0.6438	-0.001
1.6582	-0.012	1.5538	-0.015	0.6438	-0.001	0.6031	-0.001	0.6438	-0.001
1.6582	-0.012	1.5538	-0.015	0.6438	-0.001	0.6031	-0.001	0.6438	-0.001
1.6582	-0.012	1.5538	-0.015	0.6438	-0.001	0.6031	-0.001	0.6438	-0.001
1.6582	-0.012	1.5538	-0.015	0.6438	-0.001	0.6031	-0.001	0.6438	-0.001
1.6582	-0.012	1.5538	-0.015	0.6438	-0.001	0.6031	-0.001	0.6438	-0.001
1.6582	-0.012	1.5538	-0.015	0.6438	-0.001	0.6031	-0.001	0.6438	-0.001

Source: FT Information

150 من الاجل

15 من الاموال

Airtours chief to set up new base in US

Andrew Yates

Airtours chief executive, Sir John Giddens, is to set up a new base in the US, according to sources close to the travel company. The move is part of a strategy to expand the company's presence in the American market, where it has been operating for several years. Giddens is expected to lead the new venture, which will focus on promoting Airtours' holiday packages to US tourists. The company has been successful in recent years, and this move is seen as a sign of its continued growth and ambition.



COMMENT

Whatever popular measures Mr Brown announces to help young people into work or boost families on low incomes, the bottom line as far as the City is concerned will be the net increase in the tax burden compared with last November's Budget.

Irrational exuberance could evaporate quickly

Has irrational exuberance finally crossed the Atlantic? The stock market yesterday made its biggest one-day gain since the crash of 1987. The driving force was the expectation that Gordon "Iron-Bru" Brown will deliver a tough, tax-raising Budget that will also contain special measures to help business. It is hard to recall when business and the City last called for tax increases, but that seems to be what they want this time round. Consumers to suffer? Hurrah, say the markets.

Whatever popular measures Mr Brown announces to help young people into work or boost families on low incomes, the bottom line as far as the City is concerned will be the net increase in the tax burden compared with last November's Budget. If it looks as if that burden is going to fall on consumer spending rather than companies, the reckoning is that if this tax increase exceeds, say, £5bn, there will be less need or excuse for the Bank of England to raise interest rates again. Most of the City is firmly convinced that it is the expectation of rising base rates that accounts for the uncomfortably strong pound. The theory is that if rates do not need to climb much further because tax hikes can head off a boom, then the pound will stop climbing too. This argument makes a few questionable assumptions. For one thing, the level of base rates is only one possible explanation for the strong pound, and it might therefore stay strong even if the prospects for UK interest rates change.

For another, it takes a net £10bn rise in

taxes to do the same cooling work as a 1 percentage point rise in base rates, according to most economic models. It would take at least this much tightening in policy to return the economy to a steady path. It is just about possible that Mr Brown would be prepared to add this much to the personal sector's tax bill, but it would be an extraordinary turnaround from Labour's manifesto.

Even so, the markets are probably right to anticipate a tighter Budget than anybody expected at first. On the other hand, they are equally likely to be overdoing it. Yesterday's high expectations may well be disappointed today. Similarly, the expectation that base rates will peak at a level below 7.5 per cent and stay there, implied by the short sterling futures market, is also likely to be disappointed in the longer run. Even in the best inflation environment since the 1960s, the business cycle peak for interest rates will almost certainly be higher. When that realisation sinks in, the exuberance could evaporate rather swiftly.

Merger should be good for Amersham's health

Amersham International is a curious company. Most people have heard of it, but hardly anyone outside the City and the medical profession knows what it actually does. Even fewer can tell you the purpose of what it does. It was also the previous government's first privatisation, and if you've

held the shares since the beginning, you would have done spectacularly well.

Now it's merging with Nycomed of Norway to create the world's largest supplier of in-vivo diagnostic imaging agents. This is the highly specialist but, in parts, fast-growing business of supplying hospitals with chemical agents, some of them radioactive, that assist in medical diagnosis. Well, all right. Let's start again. It's the business of... Oh, forget it. Amersham helps doctors find out what's wrong with you. Let's leave it at that.

Despite doubts, this is probably a good deal for Amersham. Bill Castell, chief executive, has been pursuing it for some years and together with the recently announced link-up with Pharmacia & Upjohn, it completes a carefully planned ascent into a world leading position in these markets. Amersham is still the smaller of the two companies, but in recent years it has been far more successful.

By contrast, Nycomed, operating at the mature end of the market, has had a troubled few years. Though this is no rescue takeover, Amersham is certainly ending up with a much larger share of the action - 47 per cent - than it could have hoped for when Mr Castell first began to run his slide rule over the company a few years back. It also seems to be getting the more important executive jobs, so much so that the deal could almost be characterised as a reverse takeover by Amersham.

Doubts none the less remain. Is Amersham reversing into a dog? The £40m of annual cost savings anticipated from the merger could easily be wiped out should

Nycomed lose a couple of big Health Management Organisation contracts in the US that came up for renewal over the next six months. However, both companies seem to have some promising new products and applications in the pipeline. Both companies are also in the hyper trendy field of providing alternatives to invasive surgery, thus offering the prospect of real reductions in health care costs. The fact that they complement each other geographically is an added bonus. So although Nycomed-Amersham will probably remain, for most people at least, a deeply obscure company, it looks destined to carry on quietly earning its shareholders an excellent return.

No easy way to resolve Anglo-French standoff

What does Bernard Arnault, the mercurial head of France's LVMH, really want? George Bull and Tony Greener, chairman of Grand Met and Guinness respectively, are flying to Paris today, hoping to find out. All they know for sure is that he doesn't approve of the planned merger of the two companies, so much so that he's spent nearly £1bn stake building in Grand Met and has launched an all-out legal assault on the deal through the French courts. He also mutters inscrutably about the need to bring his own Moët Hennessy into the planned get-together. But how, and under what terms? Until he puts something on the table, it is

hard to know how Grand Met and Guinness, or their shareholders, should respond.

Mr Arnault's original idea was that the Grand Met-Guinness merger should be abandoned in favour of a separate get-together of the three companies' branded drinks subsidiaries, IDV, United Distillers and Moët Hennessy. But although this might industrially seem like the sounder approach, it is hard to see how it would result in enhanced value for either Guinness or Grand Met, given that both companies would have ended up with minority holdings in the new super-drinks group. That might be the way things are done in France, but even Mr Arnault must realise that Anglo-Saxon investors are just not going to buy that kind of a deal.

So what does he hope to achieve? One possibility is that he is trying to lever up the price of Moët Hennessy. Let's be clear about this. He has no intention of selling outright for cash to Les Ros Bifs. That would be two much of a betrayal. But for paper, maybe. One of his newspapers in France has already speculated that Mr Arnault might end up with 45 per cent of GMG Brands. That's obviously an exaggeration, but a stake large enough to exercise control is certainly very possible.

Unfortunately, that too would have Anglo-Saxon investors screaming sell orders down their phones. Mr Arnault is a brilliant and determined businessman, but can he be trusted to run GMG Brands not just in his own interests, but in those of his outside shareholders too? At this stage, it's hard to see how this Anglo-French standoff is going to be resolved.

Markets soar on hopes of tax rises

Diane Coyle
Economics Editor

Share prices soared and the pound fell back from its five-year highs yesterday as the financial markets concluded that today's Budget would be tough enough to reduce the need for higher interest rates.

The FTSE 100 index leapt more than 123 points to 4,728.0, in its second biggest one-day rise on record. It was the largest gain in share prices since the recovery from the 1987 stock market crash. Meanwhile, the pound slipped back from its overnight high of DM2.91 to end at just under DM2.89. Its index against a range of currencies fell by 0.5 to 101.6.

Pre-Budget speculation that Gordon Brown will deliver tax increases designed to dampen the budding consumer boom accounted for the stock market euphoria, analysts said. This would reduce the pressure on the Bank of England to cool the economy by increasing base rates again.

Steve Wright at BZW said: "This was the last thing you'd expect before a Labour Budget."

But the market was reacting to rumours that Gordon Brown would target consumers with much higher taxes, he said.

Many experts have been calling on the Chancellor to get tough in his first Budget because rising interest rates have helped drive the pound to an uncomfortably high level.

But even as the financial markets concluded that the "Iron Chancellor" would live up to his reputation by targeting the housing market and raising "green" and "sin" taxes, Britain's biggest mortgage lender warned him that the housing market was not booming.

Halifax reported that house prices climbed 0.7 per cent in June, to a level 7.1 per cent higher than a year ago. This was far lower than separate figures last week from Nationwide. Halifax said: "There is no need for any specific Budget measures aimed at curbing an allegedly 'booming' housing market."

The latest business survey yesterday, of purchasing managers in manufacturing, suggested the strong pound has not yet



Free for all: The Chancellor, Gordon Brown (left), launches Freepost Budget 97 and Pocket Budget 97, schemes which will give people information about the Budget and Mr Brown's plans for running the economy. He is watched in Downing Street by Financial Secretary Dawn Primarolo and Chief Secretary to the Treasury Alistair Darling. Photograph: Tony Buckingham

harm output or exports. But it has almost certainly hit profit margins on export business.

Peter Thomson, director general of the Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply, said: "It is encouraging that exports have not yet been hit by the pound. What is left of British industry is a good deal more efficient than it used to be."

But Robert Barrie, chief economist at BZW, said: "Right across the economy profit margins are under pressure. Companies are finding it hard to make money." Relief from the strong pound was urgently needed, he warned.

Most economists have been predicting only modest tax increases, amounting to less than £5bn, on top of the windfall tax on privatised utilities. Yesterday

these expectations had been revised up, with the City now expecting a rise in the tax burden big enough to make a difference to the interest rate outlook.

Analysts warned that the markets would fall in an equally dramatic fashion if these new expectations were disappointed.

"The stock market would be very much disappointed if Gordon Brown doesn't deliver

now," said Mr Wright. A warning signal was the fact the gains have been concentrated on a relatively small number of stocks, he said.

Since the start of this year five shares - HSBC, Glaxo, Wellcome, Lloyds TSB, Shell and SmithKline Beecham - have accounted for nearly 60 per cent of the rise in the FTSE 100.

Market Report, page 25

Stamp prices could rise to fund Post Office pensions

Chris Godsmark
Business Correspondent

The Post Office could have to inject a further £150m a year into its pension schemes, enough to force the organisation to raise the price of postage stamps, if the Chancellor makes sweeping changes to the taxation of share dividends in today's Budget.

The full burden, which would

come if Mr Brown removed the tax credit on dividends for institutional investors, would knock 10 per cent off the £10bn value of the two Post Office funds. Richard Close, finance director, warned the organisation would have to raise its pension contributions. "The issue is the sheer size of our pension fund. It's the second or third largest in the UK," he said.

The Post Office yesterday

reported record profits of £577m for the year to the end of March, an increase of 37 per cent, and intensified its campaign for greater commercial freedom. The increase came from the 1p rise in the price of stamps last year, which raised £130m. The Post Office paid £285m of the profits to the Treasury, while a further £216m would go in corporation tax.

The Post Office blamed a

£21m loss in its Parcelforce division last year on strikes at Royal Mail, which it said had put off new customers. It also announced the creation of 400 jobs in a £10m telephone marketing centre in Sunderland. A further three call centres are planned by Subscription Services, the business which collects BBC licence fees.

Announcing his retirement as chairman, Sir Michael Heron

warned the Government not to spend too long on its review of the Post Office's operations.

"The Post Office has to be treated as more than a cash cow for Government. It's possible for Government to continue to benefit from the Post Office's profitability while offering more commercial freedom to compete with post offices from abroad."

In a submission to the Department of Trade and Industry

the Post Office will urge for a fixed percentage of profits to be paid as a dividend to the Treasury each year, rather than a variable cash target. It will also ask for freedom from public spending and pay limits, and the ability to make acquisitions and form joint ventures. Though the DTI previously ruled out privatisation, Post Office sources suggested a partial share sale could be on the political agenda.

MDIS suspends share listing

Andrew Yates

Dealings in shares in beleaguered McDonnell Information Systems computer services group were suspended yesterday pending the results of a rescue refinancing package. MDIS is trying to raise more than £20m through a placing of new shares and is expected to announce it made a loss of £39.4m in 1996. It lost £39.4m in 1995.

MDIS has been forced to make huge provisions to cover a host of loss-making contracts it took on several years ago.

John Klein, chief executive who joined the group last year as part of a management shake-up, is desperate to draw a line under a disastrous few years for the group.

"We have thrown the kitchen sink at it. This is an attempt to create a new start for MDIS after the problems of the past," a company spokesman said.

MDIS advisers, Close Brothers, insist that they would be able to raise enough money to save the group. "The refinancing is progressing well and the demand for shares is encouraging," said Colin Keogh,

chairman of Close Brothers corporate finance yesterday.

It is thought existing shareholders could subscribe for more than half of the shares. Most of the original investors in MDIS already bailed out when the true extent of its problems came to light soon after its flotation.

One industry source suggested that many of its current shareholders only bought shares recently and are sticking by the group in the hope that the loss on their investment can be mitigated.

MDIS has been one of the

Arnault set to talk with spirits groups

Andrew Yates

Talks that are scheduled to be held this afternoon between Bernard Arnault, the combative head of the LVMH luxury goods group, and Guinness and Grand Metropolitan over the two spirit groups' £23bn merger appear doomed to failure unless one side is prepared to make a last minute concession.

Guinness, which has a 34 per cent stake in LVMH's Moët Hennessy drinks division, and Grand Metropolitan believe that a merger would be in the general interests of their shareholders and are determined to push the deal through.

But LVMH, which is the largest shareholder in both Guinness and GrandMet, wants to break up the deal. Instead Mr Arnault wants to broker a merger of Moët Hennessy with the IDV and United Distillers, the respective spirits divisions of GrandMet and Guinness. Neither party seemed willing to compromise yesterday and both believed the other should take the lead in the negotiations.

It is thought that GrandMet and Guinness would be prepared to give Mr Arnault an equity stake in the combined spirits business providing the Guinness and GrandMet merger goes through. But LVMH is understood to have ruled out such a proposal. Mr Arnault is also unwilling to sell LVMH's 66 per cent stake in Moët Hennessy to Guinness.

Mr Arnault has spent £800m buying a 64 per cent stake in GrandMet over the last month in an apparent attempt to increase his bargaining power at the negotiating table. But he needs 25 per cent of GrandMet's shares to block the merger.

If the talks fail the fate of the merger will then be in the hands of the French courts. Mr Arnault believes the Guinness-GrandMet merger signifies a change of control of Guinness and triggers a pre-emptive right by LVMH to buy back the UK's company's minority shareholding in Moët Hennessy and its lucrative drinks distribution contracts around the world.

IN BRIEF

Rothschilds reveals £74m operating profit

The Rothschild family published the profits of their banking empire for the first time in its 199-year history. Rothschilds Continuation Holdings, the Swiss-based holding company, made an operating profit of Sfr179m (£74m) in the year to the end of March, an increase of 66 per cent on the previous year. Operating income rose 52 per cent to Sfr839m. The London-based operations N M Rothschild contributed £124m, about a third of the total and up 4 per cent on the year. Group share capital is Sfr1.3bn, which puts it in the same league as Hambros as a medium-sized merchant bank.

Metroline directors in line for £1.6m

Four directors of Metroline, including managing director Declan O'Farrell, stand to make an instant profit of up to £1.6m when the London bus group floats on the stock market later this month. They are selling up to 20 per cent of their holdings. Metroline's drivers and other staff will make an average profit of around £10,000 each and Metroline plans to award them another 1 per cent of the company in share options. The employees will also be given the opportunity to subscribe for £1m worth of shares in the group.

Investment Column, page 24

Scottish Widows buys into Direct Line

Royal Bank of Scotland has sold half of the life insurance and unit trust business of Direct Line, its telephone-based financial services arm, to Scottish Widows, the mutual insurance company, for an undisclosed price. The bank and Scottish Widows agreed last year to use the insurer's expertise to sell personal pensions over the phone.

£1 charge for Abbey National savers

Abbey National is to charge more than 450,000 savers in its Instant Plus Account £1 for every transaction made at the counters of all its branches. A spokesman said charging would start in September. The move was prompted by the fact that although the account was meant to be linked to automated cash machine use, many Instant Plus customers still used counter services. There are no plans to charge other account holders from using counter services, the spokesman added.

Lewis gains stake in Italian football club

English National Investment Company, the investment trust in which Mr Joe Lewis acquired a controlling stake in 1995, has paid £2.4m in cash for a 29.9 per cent stake in Olto, the holding company which last month bought the football club Vicenza, the winners of the 1997 Coppa Italia. It also acquired rights to lift its stake to 62 per cent for a total investment of around £5m, equal to about a third of the price of Alan Shearer and half the cost of Juninho, the Brazilian international. Other shareholders in Olto include Stellikan, a Milan-based investment company, the football marketing group CSI and Pangolin, a private investment company owned by Robert Herscov, managing director of Telepiu, the Italian pay-TV group.

Boeing takeover gets US go-ahead

The US Federal Trade Commission approved the takeover of McDonnell Douglas by Boeing. The deal now goes to the European Union competition commissioner Karel van Mieri who is expected to rule on the merger by the end of the month. EU officials are concerned about the exclusive supply agreement Boeing has signed with Delta, American Airlines and Continental.

Pearson sells stake in Troll for \$92m

Pearson has sold its 49 per cent stake in Troll Communications for \$92m (£55.5m) to Torstar Corporation, a Canadian publicly quoted company. The proceeds will be used to reduce Pearson's net borrowings.

Safeway sees sales rise 11 per cent

Safeway like-for-like sales in the year to date were up 3.2 per cent, with total group sales up 7.3 per cent, David Webster, chairman, told the annual general meeting. Total sales have grown by 11 per cent, helped by transfers of stores from Presto. Consumer prices are on average 0.5 per cent below last year, with volumes up by a "healthy" 3.7 per cent.

Orange tops mobile phone growth table

Chris Godsmark

Stiff competition for mobile phone customers in the spring saw Vodafone drop to last place in the race to expand the four UK networks while Orange maintained its lead. Figures released yesterday showed Vodafone's net UK subscriber base grew by just 53,000 between

April and June to 2.9 million, down from 67,000 in the first quarter of the year and 146,000 in the last quarter of 1996.

Analysts blamed the drop on a tougher credit control policy introduced by Vodafone into service providers which limited the group's airtime. Chris Godsmark, Vodafone's chief executive, said the reduction in customer contracts from 15 to 12 months had depressed the figures by some 35,000.

Orange, the newest network, topped the growth table for the second quarter in a row, though the increase of 86,000 to 980,000 was below the 109,000 recorded between January and March. Orange announced it had moved into the black, before deducting interest, taxes and depreciation costs, in April.

The biggest turnaround came from Cellnet, which added 74,000 net new customers between April and June. The first quarter had been disastrous, with an increase of just 12,000.

One 2 One will later this week reveal subscriber growth of just below 80,000.

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business

C&W doubles its stake in Optus

Chris Godsmark
Business Correspondent

Cable & Wireless unveiled a further expansion of its interests in the fast-growing Asia Pacific region yesterday, with a \$445m deal to double its stake in Australia's second-largest phone and cable TV group.

The agreement, revealed in *The Independent* last week, involves C&W buying the 24.5 per cent shareholding in the company, Optus Communications, for A\$980m (£445m) from its long-standing investor, Bell South of the US. C&W already owns another 24.5 per cent of Optus, taking its total shareholding in the Sydney-based group to 49 per cent.

The deal is the latest in a string of agreements secured since Dick Brown, C&W's chief executive, joined the company a

year ago. The news helped push its shares 18p higher in yesterday's buoyant trading to 570.5p.

C&W recently took over management control by appointing Peter Howell-Davies, former head of Mercury, as chief executive. Two other senior UK managers moved across to Australia at the same time.

C&W has also gained an option to increase its stake in Optus up to 51.5 per cent and Robert Lerwell, finance director, hinted it could increase its holding. "We don't think it's essential, but we'd have to look at the time. We may do it if it was good value and assuming the Australian government was happy for us to go higher."

Another 25 per cent Optus shareholder, Mayne Nickless, has also indicated it wanted to reduce its stake. Optus had been expected to float itself later

this year, enabling Mayne Nickless to find an exit route, but Mr Lerwell suggested this could be delayed. "It could be one year, two years or three years. We don't know."

Created in 1992, Optus has 18 per cent of the country's long distance phone market, with 1.9 million customers and 32 per cent of the mobile market. Its cable network also offers pay television services to 180,000 homes. Optus made its first full-year profit last year of A\$60m.

Mr Lerwell said C&W would fund the acquisition partly with the proceeds of the sale of a 5.5 per cent stake in Hongkong Telecom, which raised £770m at the current exchange rate. The Australian deal, coupled with C&W's \$652m (£407.5m) purchase of Panama's telephone operator, meant C&W's gearing would rise to almost 70 per cent.

Two ELC directors leave after review

Nigel Cope

John Menzies, the retail group, has announced a raft of management changes at its Early Learning Centre subsidiary, which was responsible for a profits warning from the group in January.

ELC's chief executive, Ian Duncan, and managing director, Andrew Crankshaw, are leaving. While they will be eligible for compensation for loss of office, the company said the pay-offs would not be excessive as the two directors were not on the main board and were on one-year contracts.

Dermot Jenkinson, chairman of ELC and a John Menzies main board director, will take over the business until successors can be appointed.

John Menzies managing director David Mackay, who took over in January, has completed his review of the 200-strong chain and resolved not to sell it. It is understood that companies such as Kingfisher, which owns Woolworths, looked at the company.

John Menzies said yesterday that "trading at ELC continues to be impacted by competition and changes to shopping habits".

Company Results

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
Ashtons Ltd (F)	2.17m (1.75m)	-1.13m (382.18)	4.7p (2.7p)	
Birley (F)	51.18m (57.33m)	10.1m (8.4m)	13.4p (13.8p)	8.5p
Crest Nicholson (F)	192.8m (192.4m)	7.21m (2.21m)	3.80p (0.42p)	1.25p (0.60p)
Draxley Jenkins (F)	21.55m (13.55m)	2.86m (1.26m)	12.22p (7.27p)	4.75p (3.50p)
East Thomson (F)	5.50m (5.52m)	2.07m (1.23m)	4.4p (2.5p)	1.25p
Edinburgh Group (F)	32.34m (28.55m)	1.93m (2.41m)	11.4p (15.5p)	7.20p (7.0p)
London & Edinburgh (F)	1.07m (55.44A)	56.561 (51.77)	0.23p (0.25p)	nil
Lombard Holdings (F)	1.66m (851.000)	-680.000 (-487.000)	-1.0p (2.2p)	
MFI (F)	873.2m (791.7m)	70.3m (58.1m)	8.24p (8.97p)	4.8p (4.4p)

(F) - Final (I) - Interim (N) - Nine months

Luard sells Flextech shares

Roger Luard, chief executive of Flextech, the cable and satellite television programmer, yesterday sold £4.3m worth of shares in the company to its main investor, writes Cathy Newman.

Mr Luard sold 698,435 shares to Tele-Communications International (TCI), Flextech's controlling shareholder, at 622.5p each. At the same time, Mark Luiz, group financial director, sold 50,000 shares to TCI.

Mr Luard signalled his intention to sell shares and options in the company in March, after tying up two joint ventures with the BBC to supply channels to pay-television.

The shares dropped from 770p to around 620p after the BBC announcement, and it is thought Mr Luard had been holding on for a higher price before selling. However, the 622.5p a share he eventually secured is some way off Flextech's year-high price of 802.5p.

Kitchen sales should boost MFI

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY NIGEL COPE

There are few stock market sectors as highly volatile as retailing at the moment where the slightest slip is punished mercilessly. Just ask shareholders in MFI. Shares in the furniture group soared from 115p at the beginning of 1995 to 209p last autumn on strong sales increases and the recovering housing market.

But news of a sales slowdown in March hammered the stock, which halved to just over 100p.

With its volatile past, the market has always been slightly jumpy about MFI so it is no surprise that the retail watchers are divided on the prospects for the group, which yesterday reported a 21 per cent increase in pre-tax profits to £70.3m for the year to 26 April.

On the positive side, like-for-like sales have started to move ahead since the May election and in the first nine weeks of the year are 5 per cent up on the same period last year.

That compares with a strong increase of 15 per cent the previous year and so is a creditable achievement.

Perhaps the most encouraging news is the level of enquiries for kitchens which are thought to be ahead by a double-digit figure on last year.

MFI typically converts 60 per cent of these enquiries into sales and it is the more expensive kitchens such as Schreiber that are generating the most interest.

Then there are the HomeWorks conversions where half the stores have been updated to the new format which offers wider ranges and an airier feel. These conversions still deliver a strong sales increase.

But there are still uncertainties over MFI's market. One issue is the degree to which it will benefit from the windfall factor which John Collier, chief executive, says has not yet filtered through to its kitchen and bathroom sales.

Another is the housing market which MFI says is not booming outside London and could be hit by today's Budget measures on mortgage interest tax relief and stamp duty.

It is also unclear how MFI is faring on market share. It admits that it is reviewing its position in upholstery, which accounts for 3 per cent of group sales and does not make any money. And with strong sales from the likes of B&Q and the John Lewis Partnership these gains must be coming from somewhere.

Another concern is rising costs with higher interest charges as well as rising rent and rate costs. Capital expenditure jumped from £60m to £73m last year and will rise to £80m in the current year.

The wide spread of brokers' forecasts for MFI shows how hard the company

is to judge. But on UBS's figure of £77.5m, the shares, down 6p to 129p yesterday, trade on a forward rating of 12. This is a 10 per cent discount to the sector and after recent weakness the shares rank as a hold.

Crest cashes in on housing boom

Crest Nicholson, the Surrey-based building and construction group, has been nothing if not accident-prone. The business had a torrid recession after over-extending its land bank in the 1980s and then came a crop in 1995 as a result of mismanaged expansion in the Midlands and the East. That led to a major clear-out of middle managers, but with a low base to build from and with half its business still in the currently accelerating south-east property market, Crest should have a fair wind behind it this year.

The interim figures to April certainly bear out that analysis. Pre-tax profits more than tripled, rising from £2.21m to £7.21m, on turnover 15 per cent ahead at £153m.

The figures were driven by residential housing, which saw margins soar from 3.8 per cent to 11.5 per cent. The improvement is all the more impressive given that there was no help from residential land sales this time, which raised £5.7m in the first half of 1996.

Clearly, management has made strenuous efforts to rein in costs which had been running out of control. Even so, Crest has cashed in on the gathering south-east housing boom. Overall reservations jumped by more than 30 per cent in the period, leading to a 10 per cent rise in numbers of houses sold.

Meanwhile, higher prices helped boost the average selling price by 8.6 per cent to £104,000.

Naturally, what happens with mortgage interest relief and stamp duty in today's Budget is causing the company some concern, at least in the short term.

The omens on that front are encouraging, given the continuing strength of the market and the fact that the expected dip caused by the May general election failed to materialise.

But with its history, the market will want evidence from Crest that it has

truly turned the corner and there were some jitters yesterday that the formation of a new western division is the precursor to further geographic expansion.

So even with SBC Warburg bumping up its full-year profit forecast by a third to £20m yesterday, the shares, up 1.5p to 104p, on a lowly forward multiple of 9, are only attractive for the stout-hearted.

Metroline set for a comfortable ride

Metroline, the London bus operator which is driving to the stock market later this month with a value of around £35m, looks an attractive prospect. Metroline's management bought the business from London Transport in 1994, one of 10 such businesses privatised over the past few years. Since then turnover has risen from £16m to £37m and profits have more than tripled to £3m.

Most of its income is fixed and regulated by London Transport, which has awarded it five-year franchises to run services throughout north-west London. But by improving efficiency and cutting back on overheads Metroline has been able to significantly improve margins. It has already done most of the hard work and margins are unlikely to rise much further. That said, Metroline is winning plenty of new work from competitors as new routes come up for grabs and the London bus market should continue to grow steadily if the Labour government is serious about endorsing public transport. It is also growing the top line by diversifying into new areas such as providing buses on tourist excursions and supermarket shopping trips.

Acquisitions should follow quickly after the flotation. It is raising up to £5m to pay off debts and give it the financial firepower to make purchases. Targets include the host of small bus companies in and around London.

Metroline forecasts profits of at least £4m for the year to this October. Analysts reckon the shares will be priced on a prospective price-earnings ratio of between 10 and 11. That puts the stock on at least a 20 per cent discount to rivals such as FirstBus or Stagecoach.

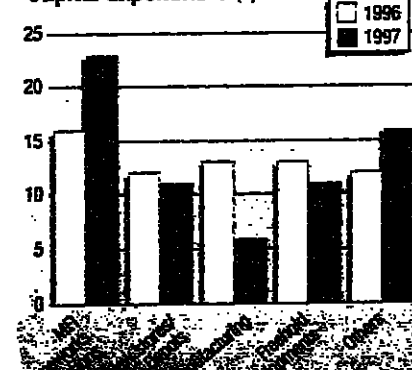
Bid speculation is also likely to add spice to the share price. Metroline is believed to have had informal takeover talks with FirstBus. It has decided to go it alone but there are plenty of predators ready to pounce if its managers steer the wrong path. Investors should climb aboard.

MFI: At a glance

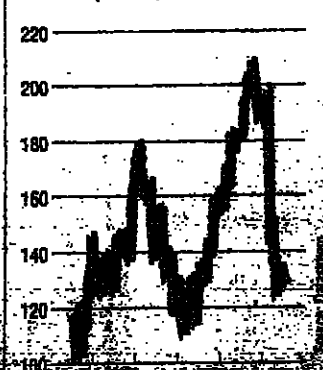
Market value: £761.4m, share price 129p

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Five-year record					
Turnover (£m)	609.9	659.4	740.7	798.2	853.5
Pre-tax profits (£m)	15.5	67.8	66.1	58.1	70.3
Earnings per share (p)	2.3	10.0	7.9	7.1	8.2
Dividends per share (p)	3.75	4.0	4.25	4.4	4.8

Capital Expenditure (£)



Share price (pence)



Agnew leads Taylor by a length for the top job at Lloyd's

PEOPLE & BUSINESS

So who will replace Sir David Rowland as chairman of Lloyd's of London? A puff of white smoke is expected from the Lloyd's Council meeting in Lime Street today and Jonathan Agnew, former head man at Kleinwort Benson, is widely tipped for the job. Which is not to say that Max Taylor, chief operations officer of Willis Corroon, is completely out of the running.

Sir David Rowland was appointed on 1 January 1993. The chairman of the insurance market usually serves for three years. A firm of headhunters was commissioned this year and ended up with

a shortlist of three - Mr Agnew, Mr Taylor and Adam Broadbent, a former director of Schroders.

The shortlist has been handed to a panel set up by Lloyd's to select a new chairman, headed by Sir Jeremy Morse. This panel reports to Lloyd's main council today.

Apparently Mr Broadbent has dropped off the list and Mr Agnew is leading Mr Taylor by a length. Interesting that two of the candidates should be former corporate finance men. Mr Broadbent did much to build Schroders' department before he retired from the merchant bank two years ago.

He also played a huge role in making the Schroders' connection with Wertheim in New York work, and is looked upon in the City as "well-respected, active and energetic". He is a director of Cardo Engineering of Sheffield, a specialist maker of wire and cabling.

Mr Agnew is also a former corporate financier who reached the top at Kleinwort before it was swallowed by Dresdner Bank. An old boy of Eton, the Sorbonne and

Trinity, Cambridge, Mr Agnew worked on *The Economist*, in Hill Samuel and in Morgan Stanley, as well as Kleinwort and his own financial consultancy, JGW Agnew.

Now Mr Agnew is chairman of Limit, the largest corporate investor in Lloyd's, which recently acquired two of Lloyd's largest managing agencies, Bankside and Janson Green. Which helps explain why he is the favourite for the Lloyd's chairmanship.

Skip this paragraph if you're squeamish. The national symbol of South Africa is the springbok, a deer-like animal. Tourist shops in South Africa sell springbok skins. Following last Saturday's Test series victory by the British Lions over the Springbok rugby team, visiting British fans have taken to buying springbok skins and wearing them as a symbol of triumph, I am told. Gives a whole new meaning to the phrase "skinned alive".

Barclays Bank's investment banking arm, BZW, has promoted Graeme White from managing di-

rector, BZW Private Equity UK, to head of BZW Private Equity following the retirement of Errol Bishop.

Mr Bishop had his retirement bash on Monday, having been with the firm since 1981.

Mr White, 44, will take over responsibility for the operation world-wide, including France, Germany, Italy, Hong Kong and the US. BZW's specialist infrastructure team, which will establish an equity fund for investing in UK projects, will also report to him.

John Willcock



Favourite: Jonathan Agnew is chairman of Limit

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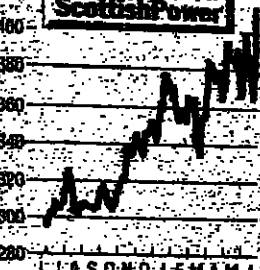
market report / shares

A crazy day as Footsie scores second-biggest gain

Data Bank		
FTSE 100	4728.3	+123.7
FTSE 250	4452.5	+21.2
FTSE 350	2278.3	+50.3
SEAQ VOLUME	792.1m shares	
53,716 bargains		
Gifts Index	96.99	+0.48

Share spotlight

Share price: pence



It was, by general consent, the craziest day the stock market has experienced for years. For no obvious reason Footsie took off, scoring its second biggest gain in its 13 years existence.

It all started with swirling stories that a bid for National Westminster Bank was about to materialise. Then the futures market soared, propelling the cash market higher.

Suddenly there were whispers the boys in dark glasses in the futures pit had got a whiff of at least some of the contents of Gordon Brown's Budget.

And, ran the yarn, the market had little to fear, with much of the pain due to be inflicted on the consumer.

Hopes that US interest rates would remain unchanged and a firm Government stocks market were other favourable influences.

With many market makers having decided to remain short

of stock ahead of the Budget the sudden futures-led activity caught them on the hop. Their scramble for cover sent Footsie rocketing, with £24.4bn added to company values. The index gained a staggering 123.7 points to 4,728.3; it was the biggest jump since the turmoil of the 1987 crash although in percentage terms it lagged behind the ERM upsurge in 1992.

The index is now 54.8 below its closing peak, hit last month. Turnover was modest, underlining the technical nature of the upsurge. And the supporting indices were left limping, largely behind. The FTSE 250 index gained a modest 21.2 points and the FTSE SmallCap managed to record a miserable 0.4 gain.

Many market men were bemused by the Footsie charge. "It's bloody crazy," the market has lost touch with reality," said one.



MARKET REPORT

DEREK PAIN

stock market reporter of the year

The NatWest story at one time had the bank leading the Footsie leader board. The shares were up 47p; they closed 42p higher at 849.5p in relatively busy trading. Commerzbank, the German group, was put forward as the new favourite to strike, although its bid candidature was dismissed by most observers.

The NatWest display inspired other financials and with money shares now such a powerful Footsie influence the index was already on a roll when the futures activity exploded. At the end of trading the September futures were showing a hefty premium to the cash index.

Lloyds TSB was top of the blue-chip pile with a 39.5p gain to 655.5p. Bank of Scotland, up 22p to 406p, and HSBC, 86p to 1,934.5p, were among the others in the money.

Utilities were strong on the unexpectedly benign approach of Margaret Beckett, President of the Board of Trade, and stories that Mr Brown's windfall tax would not be too onerous. ScottishPower glowed 22p to 413p and Thames Water flowed 34.5p to 739p.

BSkyB led the motley collection of out-of-favour blue chips with an 11p fall to 429p. LucasVarity, undertaking a 1.5 million share buyback at 205p, was another to miss the fun, off

3.5p to 204.5p. Hillsdown Holdings, the food and furniture group, fell 5p to 164p. It is meeting analysts and ABN Amro Hoare Govett quickly cut its profits forecast by £10m to £160m.

Perkins Foods held at 82.5p after Henderson Crosswhite said buy, Iceland, the frozen food chain, hardened 5.5p to 87p; NatWest Securities lifted this year's profit forecast by £5m to £24m and next by £11m to £60m.

British Petroleum Petroleum rose 27.5p to 1,445p, with HSEB said to be making positive noises.

Amerham International's Norwegian merger prompted an 87.5p gain to 1,682.5p. It encouraged thoughts of more industry deals, with Biocompatibles International moving 46p ahead to 1,347.5p.

Results left MFI Furniture off 6p at 129p; IOC International, an optics electronic

company, suffered the day's biggest fall, nearly halving to 67.5p after warning of a possible loss this year. In March the shares were 178.5p.

English National Investment Co, off 5p to 259p, confirmed it had taken a 29.9 per cent interest in Italian football club Vicenza. Bahamas-based multi-millionaire Joseph Lewis, who has 25 per cent of Glasgow Rangers, controls ENIC.

Thomas Potts returned from suspension after its failure to take over Coalite, 4.5p lower at 7.5p and Consolidated Coal was cut 5p to 7.5p following disclosures of more mining problems and plans to make a £1.8m rights issue.

Recent times was 0.5p lower at 284.5p. The shares rallied 2p after the company said it was of no reason for the recent share weakness. Earlier this month they were above 300p.

EPT jumped 38p to 172.5p on the Bank of Scotland bid.

Taking Stock

Shares of Acorn, the computer group, are weak, falling 14p to 173.5p yesterday in active trading. There are suggestions Olivetti, the Italian group, is planning to sell more shares through the Lehman Brothers investment house. The Italians, who have been selling assets to cut debts, once controlled Acorn. They have gradually reduced their involvement and earlier this year Lehman sold shares to 20 institutions at around 190p. In its last year Acorn cut losses from £12.6m to £6.3m. Its shares topped 300p last year.

Bridgeport-Gundry, once famed for its fishing nets, is continuing to sell its traditional operations to concentrate on aviation products. It is selling a turbine maker and a fishing net operation for around £1.7m. The shares rose 17p to 116.5p.

Share Price Data

Prices are in sterling except where stated. The yield is last year's dividend, grossed up by 20 per cent, as a percentage of the share price. The price-earnings (P/E) ratio is the share price divided by last year's earnings per share, including exceptional items.

The Independent Index is a composite of the FTSE 100 and the FTSE 250. It is a weighted average of the two indices. The index is calculated by adding the FTSE 100 and the FTSE 250 and dividing the total by two.

Anyone with a tone-dial telephone can use this service for a detailed description of The Independent Index, including its portfolio, history, and more. For more information, call our helpline 071 873 4376 (9am-5pm).

Market leaders: Top 20 volumes

Stock	Vol'88	Stock	Vol'88	Stock	Vol'88	Stock	Vol'88
BT	200000	Centrica	150000	AFI	80000	Standard Char'd	70000
Norwich Union	180000	NatWest Bank	100000	Polar Royce	760000	Guinness	69000
Hallco	180000	BTR	180000	Lybys TSB	750000	Grand Met	65000
ASDA Group	140000	National Grid	100000	BP	730000	Locala/Natly	65000
Shell Transport	140000	BG	100000	General Elect.	720000	Cable & Wire	64000

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and is a member of the Board of Directors of the United States

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Hungry riders craving for success

Pulling your weight can inflict a harsh penalty, reports
Greg Wood

A jockey's life almost killed Walter Swinburn at Sha Tin 18 months ago, but it was not enough to finish his career in the saddle. Now, though, it seems that a far more mundane problem will ensure that one of the most talented and popular jockeys of recent years has ridden his last winner.

It was in late April that Swinburn announced he was taking a "sabbatical" from race-riding to confront persistent problems with his weight, a reminder that the eternal conflict between jockeys and the scales does not spare the successful. And while he, with three Derbys, an Arc and two dozen other Group One winners to his name, has already accumulated enough money to retire, he has decided to keep him comfortable in retirement, for many others, the struggle goes on.

It is at its most bitter for the journeymen, who rely on riding fees for their living, rather than a share of the purses from a handful of winners. For them, the relationship between pounds of body weight and pounds in the bank can be painfully direct. "They are men like Richard Perham, whose natural weight is about nine stone but who can ride at 8st 4lb, which means, as he points out, that 'I'll be about 8st 2lb stripped'."

Weight is never far from Perham's thoughts. "The first thing I think about when I wake up in the morning is what sort of weight I'm going to be, and what I'll be the following day," he says. "If I have a light ride coming up, I'm constantly thinking about it. It's not an easy life. I try to have a bowl of bran flakes in the morning to keep the system going, and I might have some fruit on the way to the races and pick at a bit of meat at lunchtime. Then in the evening there'll be something sensible, like a bit of chicken or fish with salad."

Such austerity is almost unique among professional athletes, but Perham believes his regime is typical of all but a fortunate handful of his colleagues. "Generally every jockey tries to do lighter than they really should because everybody feels that if they can take off another pound or two, it might lead to an extra winner, a better income. Everybody craves success and wants to win."

Incidentally, the effects of this constant vigilance and denial are



Burden of proof: Seb Sanders is checked on the scales before going to mount up at Brighton racecourse

Photograph: Robert Hallam

not simply physical, but mental and emotional too. "If you are going without, it makes you angry, you bite at things you probably shouldn't do," Perham says. "It doesn't help your moods at all. People say that jockeys have a hard life, but I think that their wives have a harder time."

Michael Caulfield, secretary of the Jockeys' Association, admits that "it's a huge mental thing, it really affects their domestic life. The things which break me most in my job are the injuries, and the sight of jockeys wasting day in, day out. I never approach a jockey who's wasting, and when you see them come out of the same boiling their heads off, you think, that's no sort of life."

The sauna has been a familiar part of almost every jockey's

life for many years, but it is at best a short-term answer to weight problems. "All you're doing is dehydrating yourself," Perham says, "and the first thing that happens when you drink anything, whether it's water or tea, is that it goes straight

This will be welcome news to Dr Michael Turner, the Jockey Club's chief medical advisor, who is keen to stamp out some of the traditional, but often downright unhealthy, practices of the (note the name) weighing room. "We've always been

to the amount of exercise you take. The physical exercise jockeys get on horseback each day is actually very small, maybe 30 or 40 minutes a day. They need to run, cycle and swim to enable them to cut enough food."

Turner believes that such desperate remedies as diuretics (the "pee pills" beloved of generations of jockeys) or a finger down the throat are now on the wane. "All the older jockeys have tried diuretics or laxatives, and they tend to try it once and give it up," he says. These drugs are not, at present, on the Club's list of banned substances, but "every time we do a urine test we test for diuretics, and we don't find many, whereas the French have huge numbers, and have just added them to their banned list. In America they have problems with bu-

limia, but there's much evidence of it happening here."

Perham agrees, but only to a point. "A lot of people have lapsed with that idea and find it pretty unpleasant," he says. "But there are a couple who do it on a daily basis, and there's one jockey who has to go to Harley Street once or twice a year to have his stomach reined. That can't be a whole lot of fun, but these are the extremes that people will go to."

One way or another, jockeys will keep pushing their weight as low as it can go, and then a little further. Punters considering Swinburn's disappearance from the weighing room when he should be in his prime may conclude that the Chorbys is mad, but there is an alternative explanation. Maybe it was sanity that prevailed.

Pilsudski backed to Eclipse Bosra

Pilsudski was yesterday well backed for Saturday's Coral Eclipse Stakes at Sandown. The sponsors cut the price of last year's Breeders' Cup Turf winner, who was runner up to Predappio in the Hardwicke Stakes at Royal Ascot last time out, to 3-1 from 4-1.

"There has been a significant gamble and we have laid Pilsudski to lose around £50,000," Coral spokesman Simon Clare said. "There was nothing all morning then suddenly they all came on at 1.45."

Bosra Sham, the 1996 1,000

Guinness and Champion Stakes winner who beat Alcazar by eight lengths in the Prince of Wales's Stakes at the Royal meeting last month, remains the

RICHARD EDMONDSON
NAP: May King Mayhem (Folkstone 4.20)
NB: Bina Gardens (Yarmouth 8.35)

4-6 favourite, having delighted in a gallop yesterday.

"She worked beautifully this morning and she is on course for

the race," trainer Henry Cecil reported.

Godolphin put the final piece in the Eclipse jigsaw yesterday morning by announcing Allied Forces a definite runner.

Speikh Mohammed's organisation will bid to lift the Group One prize for the third year running with Royal Ascot's Queen Anne Stakes winner, whose participation was described as no more than "likely" after the five-day declarations.

Godolphin's racing manager Simon Crisford said: "I had to talk to the owners, and it was a

simple question of whether to run—and he will definitely run."

Allied Forces, 14-1, with Coral, is outsider of the quintet with the sponsors to emulate 1995 and 1996 winner Halling.

He will be ridden by Frankie Dettori, leaving the way clear for Willie Ryan to renew his partnership with Benny The Dip. The Derby winner's odds were pushed out from 9-2 to 5-1 by Coral who also eased Sasuru's price to 10-1 from 8-1.

Costal betting: 4-6 Bosra Sham, 3-1 Pilsudski (4-1), 5-1 Bina Gardens, 10-1 Allied Forces, 10-1 Sasuru, 10-1 Allied Forces

Redcar abandoned due to waterlogging

Today's meeting at Redcar has been abandoned after recent heavy rain made the course unrunnable.

John Gundill, the clerk of the course, was scheduled to hold an inspection for 3pm yesterday to determine whether the card could go ahead.

But, before the inspection was due to take place, he reported: "The course is unfit to race due to persistent rain which has caused waterlogging."

Rain-hit Yarmouth was yesterday confident that this week's two-day meeting will beat the weather.

"The going is soft but there should be no problem at all," said groundsman Graham Waitt. "We had 15.8mm of rain yesterday and 34.2mm on Friday but even if there was more rain there will be no problem."

The forecast is for showers this afternoon and evening but the ground will take that.

Results, page 28

YARMOUTH

6.35 Ice Age 7.05 Fly High 7.35 VENI VIDI VICI (nap) 8.05 Albion 8.35 Purist 9.05 Contrarie

DRAW ADVANTAGE: Low for (1 & 6), High for (7 to 12).
DRY ADVANTAGE: High for 1 to 10.
WATER ADVANTAGE: High for 1 to 10.
WIND ADVANTAGE: High for 1 to 10.
TEMPERATURE ADVANTAGE: High for 1 to 10.

WINNERS IN LAST SEVEN DAYS: New, LONG-DISTANCE RUNNERS: Seagull (6.35) sent 279 miles by M Saunders from Hopton, Somerset.

6.35 APPRENTICE LIMITED STAKES (CLASS G) £3,000 added 3y 7y 8y
1 50150 SONGSHEAR (9) M P Sander 8.9 J P Mayhew 6
2 40040 BEAR TO DANCE (22) P Sander 8.9 J P Mayhew 6
3 33000 SONGSHEAR (9) M P Sander 8.9 J P Mayhew 6
4 10040 SONGSHEAR (9) M P Sander 8.9 J P Mayhew 6
5 12040 SONGSHEAR (9) M P Sander 8.9 J P Mayhew 6
6 40040 SONGSHEAR (9) M P Sander 8.9 J P Mayhew 6

6.35 ROMNEY MARSH MAIDEN STAKES (CLASS D) £4,850 added 2y 0y 1y 18yds
1 00040 SONGSHEAR (9) M P Sander 8.9 J P Mayhew 6
2 40040 BEAR TO DANCE (22) P Sander 8.9 J P Mayhew 6
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6 40040 SONGSHEAR (9) M P Sander 8.9 J P Mayhew 6

SELLING STAKES (CLASS G) £3,000 added 3y 7y 8y

1 00040 SONGSHEAR (9) M P Sander 8.9 J P Mayhew 6
2 40040 BEAR TO DANCE (22) P Sander 8.9 J P Mayhew 6
3 33000 SONGSHEAR (9) M P Sander 8.9 J P Mayhew 6
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6 40040 SONGSHEAR (9) M P Sander 8.9 J P Mayhew 6

WOODCHURCH HANDICAP (CLASS F) £3,300 added 6f 18yds

1 00040 SONGSHEAR (9) M P Sander 8.9 J P Mayhew 6
2 40040 BEAR TO DANCE (22) P Sander 8.9 J P Mayhew 6
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LEAS HANDICAP (CLASS E) £4,025 added 3y 1m 7f 9yds

1 00040 SONGSHEAR (9) M P Sander 8.9 J P Mayhew 6
2 40040 BEAR TO DANCE (22) P Sander 8.9 J P Mayhew 6
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WIMBLEDON 97



Martina Hingis, the No 1 seed from Switzerland, powers a backhand during her straight-sets victory over Sabine Appelmans, of Belgium

Photograph: David Ashdown

American eagle comes under threat

No sooner have we jettisoned the "What's gone wrong with British tennis" stories than another nation is going through a bout of worried introspection. This may not have you weeping into your cereal this morning but the Americans are suffering.

Take a look at the Wimbledon singles and you can see why. There is just one American left, a certain Pete Sampras. And while it would not exactly be a surprise if he was lifting the Renshaw Cup for the fourth time in five years on Sunday, it would merely camouflage an ailing nation.

The statistics tell the story of the flagging Stars and Stripes. In 1985, there were 32 American men in Wimbledon's second round, this year just six made it, three fewer than the previous low in the open era. The women's cupboard is bare. Take away Martina Navratilova, a Czech who became a naturalised American, and the last one to win Wimbledon was Chris Evert in 1981. Old glory, indeed.

Tennis doesn't seem to be exciting too many fans in the United States. Lindsay Davenport, the American fifth seed who flopped in the second round, said: "People aren't playing the sport and they're not watching it right now too much, either. What do you do to change that? I don't know."

Most of the players that have come up through the States in the past have been from at least middle-class fam-

ilies. Something has to be done to help the people who don't have the money.

Which, according to people who follow the game, is precisely the problem. "Ask me what's wrong with American tennis," Hubert Harewood, of Florida's *St Petersburg Times*, said, "and I'll give you a two-word answer: Michael Jordan. Kids want to play basketball, baseball or American football. Tennis comes a long way down."

Art Spander, of the *Oakland Tribune*, added: "Most of our top sportsmen these days are black and they see no brothers, as they'd put it, playing the game at top level. If anything it's golf they are being attracted to, thanks to Tiger Woods."

"The system does not help."

Guy Hodgson on the worrying lack of top-flight player material coming through from the United States

In basketball, Jordan is talking to the media 82 times a year, which projects the sport. I'm told Pete Sampras is a great guy but you can't get near him to find out.

Admittedly, the American impact on Wimbledon 1997 has been diluted by injuries to Andre Agassi, Todd Martin and Mali'Vai Washington but even if they were here, they could not bridge the generation gap that is worrying US tennis. None of their men in the top 100 is under 24 and apart from the 20-year-old, 6ft 5in, Justin

Gimelstob, who is 117 in the world, the future looks barren. Among the juniors, they have just three boys in the top 50. 19th-ranked Rudolf Nalke the highest. In the junior boys' doubles, there is not one American in the top 50. Britain has five.

So where have the people who flocked to see John McEnroe and Jimmy Connors gone? The impact of the charismatic but brash duo had a twinged impact. "They brought people in to watch tennis," Spander said, "but a lot of

them weren't real fans. As soon as McEnroe and Connors had gone they were lost to the sport."

They turned a lot of people off, too. The stomping around and the anger had a lot of people looking elsewhere for their sport. "You can only speculate how many of the deterred came from the American middle-classes, the natural constituency for budding tennis players."

Richie Reneberg could have embodied the American problems yesterday. A distinguished doubles player, the 31-year-old defeated only his fourth seed in Grand Slam singles when he ousted Carlos Moya in the second round. He arrived on No 1 Court wearing a tatty bandage

on his left knee, feeling unwell. Given the way Greg Rusedski was banging the ball past him, he could have been suffering from shell shock.

Not once did he have a break point against Rusedski, not once did he look likely to progress to the quarter-finals. The shock would have been the American beating the Brit: the world has gone upside down.

"I don't know that embarrassment is the right word," Reneberg said, "but there's definitely a concern among American players and among a lot of people at the USTA [United States Tennis Association]. There are not a lot of good people coming up."

"There's a bit of a drought coming once Sampras and Agassi and these guys finish. It's not the next year or two people are worried about, it's five or six years down the line." Five years back there were three American men's semi-finalists, this time there will be a maximum of one.

US, as is useless, hardly sits well with a country that used to dominate the sport and a special committee chaired by the former USTA president Bob Cookson is investigating all aspects of American player development and is due to report before the US Open.

One fact ought to give the USTA nightmares. Britain, tennis weeklings for decades, got four men to the third round at Wimbledon. The United States managed three.



Richey Reneberg (right) troops off after defeat by Britain's Greg Rusedski yesterday

Photograph: David Ashdown

Jensens' disappearing act

The colourful doubles act that is the brothers Jensen, Murphy and Luke, arrived at Wimbledon this year with the firm intention of staying a while.

With Murphy's disappearing act a couple of years a blot on the Americans' copybook - he "went fishing" without telling his mother, brother or doubles partner, Brenda Schultz-McCarthy - they were keen to make a more lasting impression on Monday.

However, their stay lasted little more than two hours before losing in the first round to the seventh-seeded Australians Mark Philippoussis and Pat Rafter. 4-6, 6-3, 6-1.

From the moment the doubles teams walked on the court, it was obvious who the crowd favoured. Not the Americans. Instead, hundreds of teenage girls in every corner of the stands could be heard whistling

and screaming, "c'mon, Pat" or "let's go, Mark" between every point.

Seemingly unconcerned, the Jensens got off to a good start, taking the first set after breaking Philippoussis' service in the fifth game.

The Jensens were notably courteous with the ball-boys, saying "thanks, dude" after every ball they received.

Luke, who is ambidextrous, often switched hands in the middle of a service game. At set point in the first set, the brothers bumped chests after Murphy put away a hard volley.

The brothers gathered momentum in the second set, but after Luke struck a young spectator with an errant return of serve, the brothers seemed to tense up. Luke went over to the girl and apologised, and later brought her a Wimbledon towel as a souvenir.

Over the next few games, the Jensens stopped their tomfoolery, opting instead for a more conservative approach to the match. Which, however, is not what they are about, and the Jensens were quickly back to their chattering and horsing around.

The two Australians broke Luke's serve in the sixth game and quickly took the set after holding consecutive service games. In the third set, the Jensens were broken again and Rafter was soon serving for the match at 5-4.

Even turning his shirt inside out for the final game did not help Luke.

With the Jensens gone, the lack of characters at Wimbledon this year is even more apparent. Andre Agassi, the vibrant Las Vegas, is absent and it is not only female fans missing him: Pete Sampras, the No 1 seed, would also like to see him back in SW19.

Sampras, who is seeking a fourth Wimbledon triumph, said: "Andre's absence really hurts the game. He is one of the most popular players and brought a lot of attention to the game. We definitely need him."

"When I played Andre quite a bit a couple of years ago he made me a better player. It was exciting walking out with him for the US Open final. It was one of the few times I really felt the electricity from the crowd and the media."

"So you kind of want that challenge and rivalry that can get you up and going. Andre is obviously missed but the longer you are out, the tougher it is to come back. He has the talent and the game, it is just getting it back together."



QUOTES OF THE DAY

I told her after the match, 'Well, I've got two more matches to go, so I want to keep it short. That's why I played so well.' Martina Hingis, after beating Sabine Appelmans.

She's just a little bit better than most of us. She's the No 1 player in the world. I think without that attitude, maybe she wouldn't get so far. Appelmans dismisses suggestions that Hingis' comments were arrogant.

Nobody saw me as a favourite at the beginning of the tournament but I got through pretty easily until now. I'm improving every match. I feel pretty good. The draw doesn't look too bad for me. Hingis.

Well, it was lunchtime. I only know that the people who were there were tremendous and gave me so much support. Greg Rusedski, asked about the sparse attendance for his win over Richey Reneberg.

I think it was one of the best matches I've ever served in. Rusedski.

I'm kind of glad they knocked it down. I've broken my wrist there and had my longest matches in the tournament there. So when they decided to do away with it I didn't complain. Boris Becker on the new No 1 Court.

I didn't come here relaxed, not expecting anything. I expected to do well and to play well. It has nothing to do with retiring. It just has a lot to do with me trying as well as I can in this tournament right now. Michael Stich, who retires at the end of this year, after beating Mark Woodford.

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS

Men's singles	
Holder: R KRAJCEK (Neth)	
Fourth round	
G Rusedski (GB) bt R A Reneberg (US) 7-6 6-4 7-5	
C Piliavicius (Lith) bt B Steven (NZ) 3-6 6-3 6-4 7-5	
M Stich (Ger) bt M Woodford (Aus) 6-4 6-7 6-3 7-5	
B Becker (Ger) bt M Rios (Chile) 6-2 6-2 7-5	
T A Woodbridge (Aus) bt P Rafter (Aus) 6-7 6-4 7-6 6-3	
D Jagger (SA) bt Y Kafelnikov (Rus) 6-2 7-5 6-2 6-1	
Women's singles	
Holder: S Graf (Ger)	
Fourth round	
A Sanchez Vicario (Sp) bt M Pierce (Fr) 6-4 6-3	
M Hingis (Swi) bt S Appelmans (Bel) 6-1 6-3	
Y Basuki (Indo) bt P Hy-Boulais (Can) 6-0 6-4	
N Tauziat (Fr) bt S Testud (Fr) 4-6 7-5 12-10 6-1 6-3	
D Chiodova (Cz Rep) bt M Vento (Ven) 6-1 6-3	
Men's doubles	
Holder: M Woodford and T Woodbridge (Aus)	
Second round	
S Noteboom and F Wtler (Neth) bt J Novak and D Rini (Cz Rep) 6-3 3-6 7-5	
D Johnson and F Montana (US) bt J L Garsa (It) and P Schneider (Swe) 6-2 6-7 6-2	
S Stolle (Aus) and C Suk (Cz Rep) bt T Krumpholtz (US) and D Macpherson (Aus) 6-3 6-4	
M Knowles (Bahr) and D Nestor (Can) bt B Hingis (Swi) and G Van Emburgh (US) 5-7 6-1 6-4	
E Ferreira (SA) and P Galbraith (US) bt A Chirakovsky (Rus) and B Steven (NZ) 6-3 6-4	
Women's doubles	
Holder: H Sukova (Cz Rep) and M Hingis (Swi)	
Second round	
N Talden (Fr) and L Wild (US) bt L Garsa (It) and P Schneider (Swe) 6-7 7-6 6-3	
A Fusi (Fr) and R Grande (It) bt S A Sedell and A Warrington (GB) 6-3 6-4	
Third round	
G Fernandez (US) and N Zvereva (Bel) bt C Barclay (Aus) and C Wood (GB) 7-5 7-5	
Mixed doubles	
Holder: C Suk and C Sukova (Cz Rep)	
First round	
F Messem and F Peretto (It) bt S E Davis (US) and P Tashiro (Arg) 6-4 6-4	
Men's singles	
M Bhupathi (Ind) and R Hirani (Japan) bt C J Van Rensburg (SA) and V Williams (US) 6-7 6-3 6-2	
G Connell (Can) and L Davenport (US) bt T Venters (Neth) and N Van Loven (Fr) 3-6 6-2 6-2	
G Raux (Fr) and L Golarsa (It) bt B Tait (SA) and D Van Roost (Bel) 6-3 7-5	
K Braich and B Rittner (Ger) bt J Grabb and D A Grahame (US) 4-6 7-5 15-13	
Men's over-35 doubles	
Round-robin first round	
D Doreilly (US) and D Visser (SA) bt P Stoll and T Smed (Cz Rep) 6-4 3-6 6-1	
I Curran and J C Kiek (US) bt B Gilbert and T Mayotte (US) 6-4 6-2	
M Basse (GB) and R Kishikawa (Ind) bt A Amrith and V Amrith (Ind) 6-2 5-7 6-4	
Men's over-45 doubles	
M Resnan and S Stewart (US) bt T Gorman and S Smith (US) 6-1 7-5	
J Fild (Chile) and R Stockton (US) bt J Kocak (Cz Rep) and A Motzwiller (Rus) 6-2 6-1	
R C Lutz and R Tanner (US) bt K Rosewall and F Stolle (Aus) 6-1 6-4	
N Fraser and A Stone (Aus) bt R Hewitt and P McMillan (SA) 6-3 6-2	
O Davidson (Aus) and E Driedale (SA) bt I Massie (Rom) and T Ocker (Neth) 4-6 6-3 6-4	
Women's over-35 doubles	
J Dore (GB) and A E Smith (US) bt R Casals (US) and B Stone (Neth) 6-2 6-2	
L Charles and A Hobbs (GB) bt H Gouley and G Reid (Aus) 6-4 6-4	
Boys' singles	
First round	
D Belcher (GB) bt R Jegede (Nigeria) 6-3 6-4	
R Nira (Rom) bt J Trozman (GB) 6-1 2-6 6-2	
M Gregoric (Sloven) bt O Karpenko (Ukr) 3-6 6-3 6-4	
F Anolie (Pol) bt O Levant (Fr) 7-5 7-5	
L Home (Peru) bt T Dent (US) 6-2 6-3	
F Gonzalez (Chile) bt N Ouellet (US) 6-4 6-4	
M Grolmus (Slovak) bt I Beres (Croat) 3-6 6-3 6-3	
S Dacian (GB) bt J Duenas (Dom) 6-4 6-1	
M Zewar (Eg) bt A Dulko (Arg) 3-6 6-3 6-4	
K Ziv (Isr) bt A Derapasio (Rus) 7-6 6-4	
Girls' singles	
First round	
A Sobova (Slovak) bt S Turner (GB) 7-5 6-1	
A Ghanam (Aus) bt B Moutassine (Mor) 7-6 7-6	

TOMORROW'S HEADLINE?

Kiefer the surprise package

That the top of the men's game is in a state of flux could not be more amply demonstrated than by the match that today sees the 19-year-old German Nicolas Kiefer (he will be 20 on Saturday) and the seasoned Australian doubles specialist Todd Woodbridge competing for a place in Wimbledon's last four. What kind of a quarter-final is that, you may ask? Both men have taken the tournament completely by surprise. The 26-year-old Woodbridge, ranked 37 in the world, claimed Michael Chang's scalp in the first round, but that was not as great an achievement as beating Patrick Rafter yesterday. Kiefer, ranked 98, is building on a glittering junior career (he was Australian and US champion in 1995), though he had done little this year until his wins over Andre Medvedev and Yevgeny Kafelnikov here. It looks like Kiefer's mobility against Woodbridge's know-how in the first meeting between two men who must hardly be able to believe what is happening.

Simon O'Hagan

Court circular

Historic moment for Basuki

Yesterday, out on Court Four and probably before the majority of visitors had even purchased their ground tickets, a little piece of history was being made.

Yayuk Basuki's 6-0, 7-6 fourth round win over Patricia Hy-Boulais of Canada marked the first time that an Indonesian player has ever reached the quarter-finals of the women's singles event at Wimbledon.

Football is the most popular sport in Indonesia and the number of ranked players reflect this bias. Basuki is one of only nine female players to hold a world ranking and while she enjoys being the world No 26, her nearest national rival is a massive 350 places behind her.

A spokesman from the Indonesian High Commission said

that although an Indonesian used to be the Asian title No 1, he could not bring to mind a professional Indonesian player currently competing in the men's game.

Basuki, from Jakarta, said of her win: "For me, this is something special. Hopefully my country is proud of me."

To put Yayuk's mind at rest, the High Commission has confirmed that "The Indonesian people are very proud of Yayuk's achievement. It is very hard to compete in Wimbledon today, but we are not too surprised by her success because she often beats top-ranked players."

If Yayuk continues winning, Indonesian fans will probably be able to watch her live on TV - presumably as long as it doesn't clash with a football match.



Nicolas Kiefer, the 19-year-old German, goes flat out to beat Yevgeny Kafelnikov yesterday

Photograph: Empics

Oh I say, Vijay

Vijay Amrith was always a bit of a smoothie - he was the perfect urbane match for Roger Moore in *Octopussy* in 1983 - so it's not surprising that he is a fervent admirer of the late Dan Maskell.

Amrith, the former Indian Davis Cup player who graced many a Wimbledon and is now a television commentator himself, could not have paid the Voice of Tennis a bigger compliment than by copying his style.

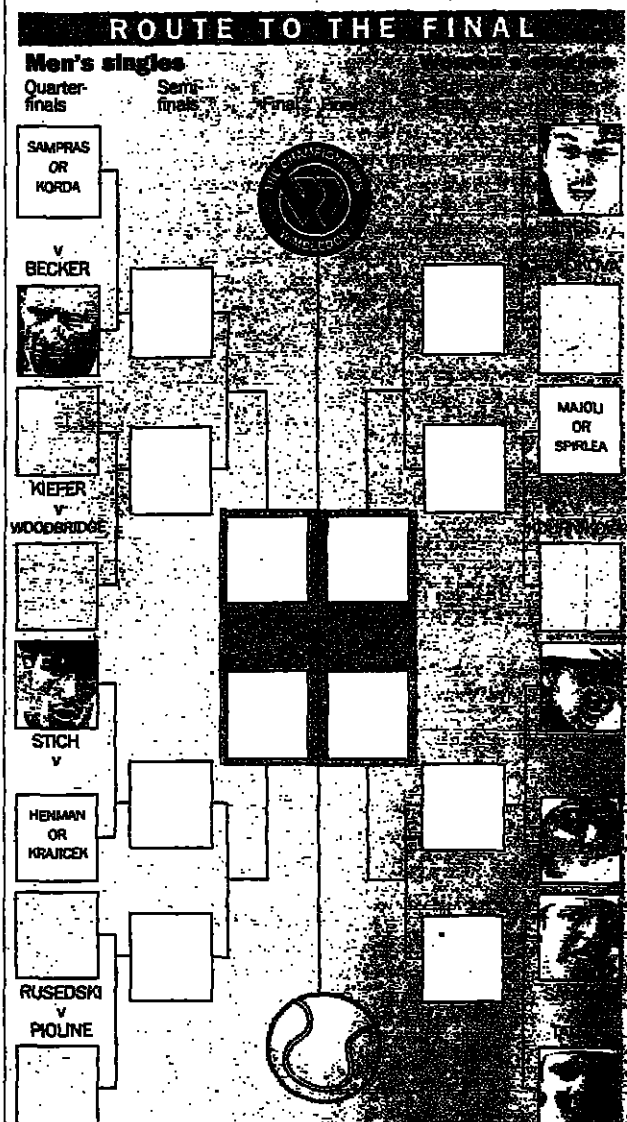
The perennially smiling Indian, who used to take opponents by surprise by applauding their winners, says: "I always thought



Maskell Amrith

Dan was easily the best television commentator. He had this endearing habit of saying 'Oh, I say' when something spectacular happened. It summed up a great shot far better than some going on and on about it.

"So now I'm an 'Oh, I say' man myself. I know Dan would not mind."



THE NUMBERS GAME

- 13 The games Arantxa Sanchez Vicario has lost in her four matches to date
- 3 The double faults Greg Rusedski serves in his match against Richey Reneberg
- 175 The places Britain's Karen Cross is expected to climb in the rankings after her excellent run
- 1624 The time play was resumed after rain on Tuesday
- 1635 The time play was suspended when the rain clouds opened again on Tuesday
- 1887 The year Wimbledon youngest stages champion Lottie Dod won the ladies' singles competition

TODAY'S WEATHER

Generally cloudy with showers expected Maximum temperature

Game set and watch.

ROLEX

OFFICIAL TIMEKEEPER TO THE CHAMPIONSHIPS WIMBLEDON

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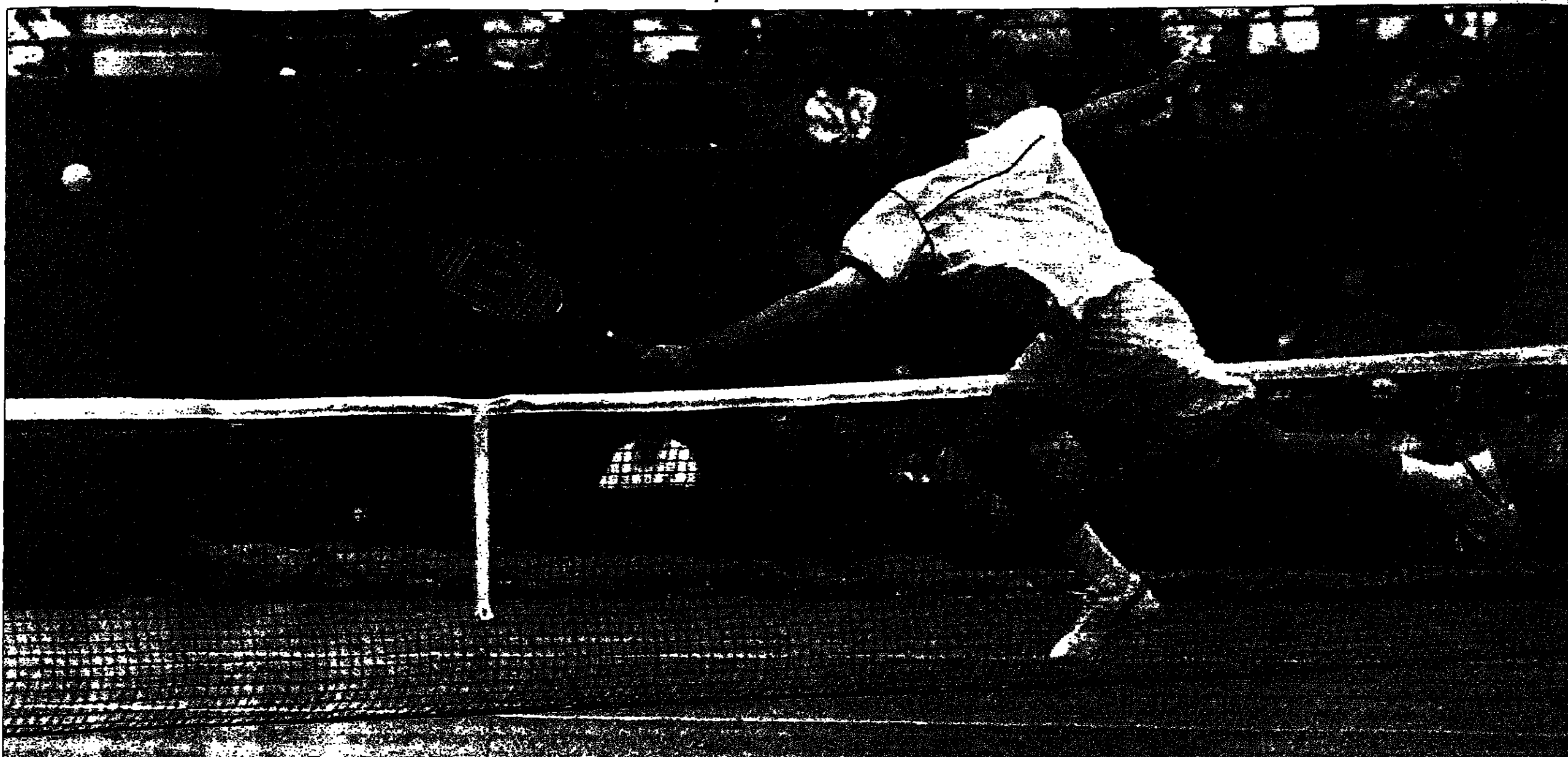


Lions' stampede
Record result for British Isles
against Free Staters, page 28

sport

Bard of Wales
Robert Croft and the art of Test
match off-spin bowling, page 28

WIMBLEDON '97: British No 2 reaches Grand Slam quarter-final for the first time as Becker leads the German charge



Full stretch: Greg Rusedski, the British No 2, extends his game to reach a place in the quarter-finals by beating the American Richey Reneberg in a rain-interrupted match at Wimbledon yesterday

Photograph: David Ashdown

Rusedski rises to the grand occasion

JOHN ROBERTS

Tennis Correspondent



The dream continues. Greg Rusedski assured his adoptive Britain of a place in the men's singles quarter-finals for a second consecutive year and added to America's woes by defeating Richey Reneberg, 7-6, 6-4, 7-6.

The Canadian-born British No 2 now meets the experienced Frenchman Cedric Pioline for a place in the semi-finals. The last Briton to achieve that was Yorkshire's Roger Taylor, who lost to Bjorn Borg.

Rusedski is linked with Yorkshire inasmuch as his mother was born in Dewsbury, but there can be little doubt of his commitment to the national cause since his transfer from Montreal in 1995.

No sooner did he arrive than he embraced the flag, winning a place in the last 16, at which point he was defeated by Pete Sampras.

On this occasion, Rusedski hopes to enjoy an extended

run. "I've got a difficult match against Cedric Pioline," he said. "It's his third time in the quarters. He returns extremely well, and I think he's going to mix it up, stay back and come in, and do a bit of everything."

"It's going to depend on how well I serve and how well I return. I have to return a little bit sharper than I did today, and I am going to have to hit my ground shots and work the point a bit more."

Rusedski was far happier at his work than during Saturday's second-round match against another American, Jonathan Stark. Worried by a nagging back injury, Rusedski vented his frustrations on the umpire after a disputed call.

Sunday's straight-sets victory against Andrew Richardson, a compatriot, set the tone for yesterday's performance. "I think I was better focused," Rusedski said.

"My back was really sore on Saturday, and I wasn't in such a good mood. My physio has done a tremendous job, and I'm feeling very good. You have those days where you're not always

playing your best tennis, and sometimes you do silly things out there to get yourself going."

"I'm pleased I took advantage of the situation today. I think that was one of the best matches I've ever served."

Rusedski barely had time to loosen his left arm before drizzle forced the players back to the locker-room for 17 minutes, after which the British No 2's serving was as relentless as Friday's rain.

He hit 32 aces, a total of 61 service-winners, and won 90 per cent of the points on his first deliveries. His volleys were pretty fair, too, 15 of them producing winners.

Although Reneberg managed to save the solitary break-point in the opening set, improvising a defensive drop-volley in the fourth game, he was overwhelmed in the tie-break, 7-2, feeding Rusedski encouragement he scarcely required by double-faulting to 1-5.

An impressive return by Rusedski tilted the second set his way on his second break-point at 2-2, and he secured the two-set lead after 74 minutes

YESTERDAY AT WIMBLEDON



with an ace on the first set-point.

Reneberg might have begun to despair of ever cracking the Rusedski serve after being bamboozled by three aces and a service winner in the fourth game of the third set, by which time a similarity in the pattern of points may have lulled some spectators into a midday slumber.

If so, they would have been

rudely awakened by one of the biggest cheers of the match, in response to a splendid catch by a woman in pink when a ball was deflected high into the stands off the frame of a racket. A luminous green plastic bracelet suggested that the spectator was a happy camper from the overnight queue, and her dexterity brightened the day.

The only time Rusedski appeared to be in the remotest danger of being extended beyond straight sets was when he was taken to deuce at 5-6, Reneberg reading a second serve to his backhand and driving it across the court. He then netted a return and scarcely saw the ace with which Rusedski guaranteed a second tie-break.

Reneberg missed a forehand to put his opponent at 5-4 with two serves to come. The American returned one of them over the baseline, Rusedski finishing the job on the first match-point with an ace off a second serve.

This was greeted by an explosion of cheering. Union Jacks of various sizes materialising as it dawned on the crowd that another Brit had become a member of the Last Eight Club.

Had Rusedski noticed the empty seats early in the match? "I didn't really," he said. "The

crowd that came to watch the match were terrific. They were very supportive. And I mean, it's lunch hour, 12 noon, so I guess they're off to lunch." Some might even be out to lunch if the success story continues.

"I'm very pleased to be in the quarter-finals, but I don't want to stop here," Rusedski said. "This, hopefully, is just the beginning."

Boris Becker, defeated the Chilean Marcelo Rios, seeded one place below him at No 9, to head a trio of victorious Germans into the last eight. The other two are unseeded.

Michael Stich we know. He defeated Becker to win the title in 1991.

The other one, Nicolas Kiefer, we are likely to learn much more about as time goes by. Due to celebrate his 20th birthday on Saturday, and ranked No 98 in the world, he eliminated the third-seeded

Yevgeny Kafelnikov, 6-2, 7-5, 2-6, 6-1.

Two years ago, Kiefer was the runner-up in the junior singles. Two weeks ago he played Kafelnikov for the first time, on a grass court at Halle, and was beaten, 7-6, 7-6.

Yesterday, the Russian found himself two sets in arrears before he was able to make an impression. Kiefer, unlike Tim Henman in the first round last year, did not allow Kafelnikov's prospects of a revival to linger much longer than the third set.

Kiefer's reward is a quarter-final against Australia's Todd Woodbridge, who defeated a compatriot, the 12th-seeded Pat Rafter, 6-7, 6-4, 7-6, 6-3.

Stich who is playing his last Grand Slam tournament, defeated Australia's Mark Woodforde, 6-4, 6-7, 6-3, 7-5.

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Sanchez Vicario and Hingis on cruise control

RICHARD EDMONDSON



The person who suggested two months ago that the Wimbledon ladies' singles final would be contested by Martina Hingis and Arantxa Sanchez Vicario was until recently being held, for his own safety, in secure quarters minus his shoelaces. Now that he is out perhaps he will be able to enjoy Saturday's contest.

Before the French Open, Hingis and Sanchez Vicario was not the obvious match-up for SW19. The Swiss Miss was still recovering from arthroscopic surgery on her left knee while the Spaniard was playing with the sort of alacrity that makes you want to throw at least your rackets off Beachy Head. Times have changed. Both advanced to the quarter-finals by similar scores, 6-1, 6-3, yesterday, and there was a certain symmetry also in the commendation they received from the vanquished.

Hingis has been walking unnoticed in the crowd to the courts this week inside the camouflage of a hooded sweatshirt, but there is no disguising her growing potency. In the first set against Belgium's Sabine Appelmans, the No 1 seed produced the best Wimbledon has seen of her. In the second, there was only the slightest slackening in her intensity. The match ended with an outrageously delicate return of service which appeared to land on chewing gum.

"Her game is suited for every court," Appelmans said. "She has very good hands at the net, she plays an aggressive game and she can do so much with the balls. She can do as well here as in the other Grand Slams."

There's not so much I could have done differently today. She was just better and she's only 16 so I'm sure she can still improve. She has a very complete game but if she gets more power, she can maybe hit the ball even harder. Other players, like Graf and Seles, really have to work hard around the court, but everything seems so easy for Martina. She's always in the right position and it doesn't look like she has to work very hard on court. That's the difference from the other players. She's unique."

Hingis was so cool and assured throughout that she looked on the verge of boredom. "Nobody saw me as a favourite at the beginning of the tournament but I've got through pretty easily until now," she said. Not as easily, however, as Sanchez Vicario, who has lost seven fewer games thus far at 13.

The match between the former world No 1 and Mary Pierce was scheduled on Centre Court as the appetiser before Boris and Tim. Empty seats speckled the auditorium, and the Royal Box looked like Versailles just after the Republicans had knocked on the door. It was 12.45 before the King and Queen of Malaysia, Sir Greville and Lady Spratt and friends took to their seats.

They plunged themselves into the micro-climate of an arena in which the surface suffers because of poor air circulation. An inverted T of khaki earth. From the baseline to the service line, has now been scored on the turf.

Sanchez Vicario turned up for duty minus her small-of-the-back ball-holder, but Pierce at least provided the reliable box of tricks. She smiles at such strange times that you could imagine her guffawing at a cremation. The French woman ranged between despondency

and high amusement at the battering she was taking.

It was a contest of Sanchez's guile and Pierce's muscle and in this chess game the latter was swiftly established as the pawn. The Spaniard shrewdly slowed down her opponent, and was particularly keen to let Pierce dwell on the loss of key points. In addition, she predicted the serve so consistently it appeared a recording of the match had already found its way into her possession.

After a first set which occupied just 21 minutes, there was an anticipation that Pierce, like Montserrat, would burst into devastating life. She rallied briefly, producing smashes that threatened to produce craters, but was then guilty of pressing too hard. It was over in less than an hour.

Sanchez Vicario has been in the last two finals and as the figure that has derailed her on both occasions, Steffi Graf, is now in the workshop, it appears restoration may soon be complete. "At the beginning of the year I went through a very tough moment and it's been very hard," she said. "But now everything has started going better for me. It's a great win for me today and it gives me great confidence."

So too will the words of the runner-up. "She played a great match," Pierce said. "She seemed very motivated. Definitely the way she was playing she'll be tough to beat. She brings a lot of balls back and she actually served pretty well and hit some good passing shots. Those are important shots on grass."

Pierce further attributed her defeat to a damaged arm, and a mysterious state from which she cannot really have been suffering. "I didn't feel very into the match," she said. "I was a little tired." Tired, Mary, is what nurses feel at the end of a shift.

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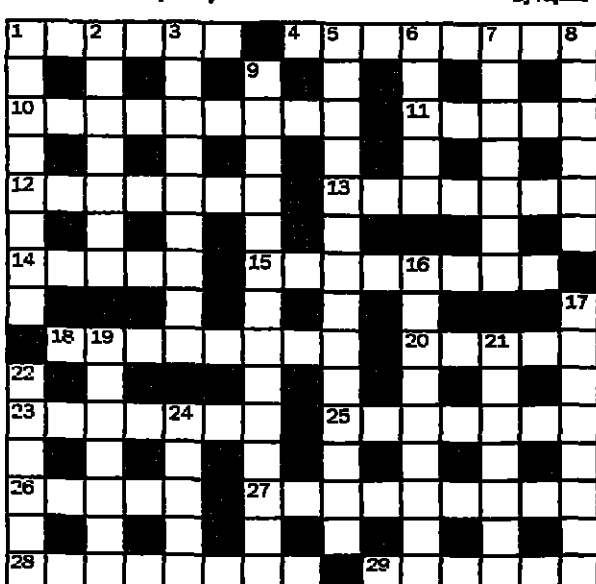
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THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3340, Wednesday 2 July

By Aquila

Thursday's Solution



ACROSS
1 Alarm when springtime comes to the underworld (6)
4 A lady's undergarment is on the wrong way — there is chafing (8)
10 Sliding scale for trombonists? (9)
11 German folklorist, sinister, with male following (5)
12 Uniformed soldiers in retreat, fatigued (7)
13 Nail-hardener used by tinker at Inishmaan (7)
14 Priest to be Head of Chapter soon (5)
15 Intimate girl puts on a little weight (8)
18 How team's beaten? Rather! (8)

DOWN
20 Reversing vehicle in event, his penalties were terrible (5)
23 Works on Graves in chateau? (7)
25 Distinction of some lines in Alice perhaps (7)
26 Mince-pies a brown colour (5)
27 Stunt in kitchen-garden (9)
28 Postpones putting drains around America (8)
29 Tried oxygen to restore journalist in charge? (6)

3 Instructions to defender on field, lifting gear? (5,3,6)
6 Boring thing to predict, we hear (5)
7 Senseless, like Hamlet's life-story (7)
8 Calling with North American pronunciation (6)
9 A perfect budget for an Oscar presentation (2,5,7)
16 Neat dude until shaken up (9)
17 Sticks on pitch, a centre of attraction (8)
19 Month at work for an ink manufacturer (7)
21 Bait men throw out, creating relaxing atmosphere (7)
22 A born leader profits by exploits (6)
24 The French hail-and-farewell (5)

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